

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 1/81
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean
Matt. 8:2

Oh! the pangs by Christians felt,
When their eyes are open;
When they see the gulfs of guilt
They must wade and grope in;
When the hell appears within,
Causing bitter anguish;
And the loathsome stench of sin
Makes the spirits languish.

Now the heart disclos'd betrays
All its hid disorders;
Enmity to God's right ways,
Blasphemies and murders,
Malice, envy, lust, and pride,
Thoughts obscene and filthy;
Sores corrupt and putrefied;
No part sound or healthy.

All things to promote our fall
Show a mighty fitness.
Satan will accuse withal;
And the conscience witness.
Foes within, and foes without,
Wrath, and law, and terrors,
Rash presumption, timid doubt,
Coldness, deadness, errors!

Brethren, in a state so sad,
When temptations seize us,
When our hearts we feel thus bad,
Let us look to Jesus.
He that hung upon the cross
For His people bleeding,
Now in heaven sits for us
Always interceding.

Vengeance, when the Saviour died,
Quitted the believer.
Justice cried, "I'm satisfied
Now henceforth for ever."
It is finish'd, said the Lord,
In his dying minute:
Holy Ghost, repeat that word;
Full salvation's in it.

Leprous soul, press thro' the crowd,
 In thy foul condition;
 Struggle hard and call aloud
 On the great Physician.
 Wait till thy disease He cleanse,
 Begging, trusting, cleaving;
When, and where, and by what means,
 To His wisdom leaving.

Joseph Hart

Swansboro, N.C.
 Rt. 2, Box 142

Dear Editor:

I wish to extend my deepest sense of thanksgiving and gratitude to our brethren and friends in all parts of the country. I was made to feel the need of prayer during my recent illness and if I'm not completely deceived I felt prayers did go up on my behalf. I expressed my feelings to my family that if this was my time to pass from this life I was ready to go, I did not know of anyway to prepare myself, only the Lord's will could be done and I felt submissive to whatever was in store for me.

My stay in the hospital and convalescing at home made me feel a renewed love for Old Baptist everywhere. My first experience of the doctrine came in 1962. Elder Zennie Rhue's message that Sunday morning in September was on the 25th Chapter of Matthew beginning with the 31st verse thru the end of the chapter. This was inspired in wisdom of salvation by grace. In my hope that was given to me at that time comes back to me from time to time, how on this morning I saw Jesus in a vision with a halo around him in the pulpit and every person in the building was on their knees with outstretched arms with this love for Christ as I felt that was the truth in the true and living God and we were in that blessed hope of eternal life to be with the Lord after death.

My husband, Elder J. T. Prescott, joins me in appreciation for your

prayers, cards, phone calls, messages, inquires and all other genuine warmth and concerns shown us.

Not who I can fellowship, but
 who can fellowship me?
 Mary R. Prescott

NOTICE

In keeping of the will of the late Samuel B. Milford and published in the *Signs* in previous years, a bequest for the following was left to the *Signs*, as trustee, to administer such.

"My said trustee, through his publication, make it known to the various Primitive Baptist Churches throughout the land that he holds said funds as trustee for the benefit of poor and unfortunate persons needing financial help, and upon the recommendation of the Elders of any of such churches my said trustee may give from the trust fund held by him such amounts as to him may seem proper to such poor and unfortunate persons."

The balance remains approximately \$2,000 to be distributed.

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Monroe, La.
July 23rd, 1955

Elder E. J. Lambert
Winnsboro, Texas

Dear Brother Lambert (I trust in the Lord),

I have been wanting to write you since you finished your book and get you to send me a copy, and I believe the price is \$3.00, so will send a check for that amount plus 25¢ to cover postage.

Brother, the dream I wrote you about worried me quite a lot till after I wrote you about it, then later I was relieved of it and am sure it was just a dream and had no spiritual significance about it, and am glad you had no comment.

I will soon be 61 years old, and it seems my vision on things is not as clear as it has been in the past, and I see more and more of the sins of this old man every day that I live and still don't know how to get away from any of them. Sure wish someone would tell me if they know, so that I may try in that way too, but at times I am made to thank Almighty God that He has led me through some very sweet and comforting experiences, which, if the Lord will strengthen me to that end, I would like to mention a few of very comforting and outstanding blessings that I know could come from no other source except through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is through His great love and mercy that I have been brought thus far,

shown the things that I believe I have seen.

The things I have in mind at this time are concerning my oldest son. I believe I will drop back to the time just before he was born into this world; that was when his mother had been in hard labor for some 12 to 18 hours and it seemed her strength was completely gone and she was gone too. The doctor and all our help had completely failed to accomplish anything. The doctor said he saw no other chance except a forced birth, so he began to sterilize his instruments. It seemed all this time my whole supplication had gone out for her, but on this wise there seemed such a great load came down on me I could not bare it, so I walked out of the house, not knowing if I would see her alive again when I returned or not. I went behind the garden, sat down on the ground, buried my head in my lap, and if not deceived, uttered a prayer to God. I don't know what all I said, but on the completion was, "Lord let the child be born, that it be a normal child and that it might live and do well. If this be not possible with Thee, then save my wife and I will still trust in thee." Now as these words were finished I felt completely relieved. I felt light as a feather and I felt perfectly sure he would be born and that everything would be perfectly alright. So I got up, hurried back to the house through the kitchen where the doctor was. And when I entered the room where she was, she smiled at me very beautifully, and I saw new life in her, and the moment I touched her a son was born and a great alarm went up from the ones that were in the room. We called the doctor to come quick, but he did not need any tools. I could give a lot more details, but this is the main event that is so outstanding with me, though it may not be worth anything to anyone who may read it.

There are two other outstanding events I would like to mention while it seems to be fresh on my mind, and that is, while my boy was in the Army, what

warning I felt and the experience he had of two very close calls. The first was on his way overseas to Africa. Some of the ships were sunk and the Army announced 1000 of our boys were lost. The ship he was on was badly damaged, but managed to get into harbor. Now after he came home I never questioned him about the things he went through with over there, but just recently he sat down and told me of these events which linked in with all the things I had seen and felt, (I say that I saw and I believe that Porter you wrote so beautifully about in the July Signs did open the door and Christ showed me these things,) one morning around nine or ten o'clock. I saw him in great danger, and this same load that I had felt several times before came down over me and I was much in distress and grieved, so I was minded to pray for him, which I stole away to myself and did as the Lord enabled me to do. So after this I felt he was safe and that fear was gone, though we did not hear from him for a long time. But I had a feeling he was alright, even after the report came out. Of course I did not know positively but what he was lost in that 1000 of our boys. I never did know just what took place until some two months ago, but this feeling I had had remained the same with me, and when he told me of the event I knew it was at the same time I had received the warning, and it did make my very soul rejoice to know of the wonderful demonstration of His love and mercy.

Now I will try to mention one other very outstanding experience that took place while he was in the jungles of India, which proves to me beyond any shadow of doubt that that All Wise and Powerful God never makes a mistake and is never too early nor too late, but exactly on time and at the right place. Now this took place some 10 or 12 months later. He was in the Airborne Corp of Engineers, and it was their duty to build air bases for our planes to land and take off. They had just finished one

base, and that morning there was a Jap plane spotted them, so they got orders to move everything off the field so many hundred yards back in the jungle, which they did as fast as they could, for they knew the Japs would be back to bomb them soon. They got everything off the base except one thing that was forgotten, and his commanding officer sent him back to get it. Before he got there, running as fast as he could, he heard the planes coming, but he got what he was sent after and started back. The Japs spotted him and took after him. They were flying several abreast and all putting out a stream of exploding shells that were so thick a man could not pass between them. They were so close he knew there was no chance for him, so he fell to the ground with his face down. Just as he hit the ground he heard a clear voice speak to him, saying, Divine love has all power. Divine love will save. On hearing this voice he was perfectly calm and not afraid at all; and by now those shells were kicking dust in his face, so they came within a few inches of him and all shut off at once. He lay there until they got out of sight, then got up thanking God for His love and mercy, took up what he was sent after and walked calmly on to where the others were; which they could hardly believe, for they felt sure he had been killed. So after this he was always very calm in everything that took place, always trusting in that one God that does all things well; and would take over at times the control of things when all the others in his bunch would go so frantic they could do nothing.

Now the part with me in this event was about six o'clock in the evening. There was such a heavy burden came over me it looked like I could not stand it. I was alone at the time, or there was no other person near me, and the tears did flow from my eyes, for I saw him in exceeding great danger. Of course I did not know what was taking place, but for

about 30 minutes I feel that I prayed to God with groanings which words cannot utter. Now after this I felt perfectly at ease. This trouble was taken from me and I felt light as a feather as if I was floating around, and I could see him perfectly safe and not a hair of his head harmed, (which was not, for he went through the whole thing for two years and came home without a scratch).

I did not know, as I said, just what took place till a short time ago when he told me about it; which all linked in with the exact time that I had these experiences.

Both of my sons and my daughter were in the service at the same time. The younger son was in the Navy, and he had it pretty rough at times, and I did have similar experiences about him, but not so vivid and outstanding as the older one; neither were his calls nearly so close.

Now the wonderful and precious blessings of God our Savior toward me and mine are much too numerous to mention, for which I feel very unworthy, but so very, very thankful for all of them. These are some of the things that strengthen my very being and I truly hope they will never be taken from my memory, for these things are food for my soul; and when I am given to joy, I feel to join David and say, Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless His Holy name. Praise the Lord and forget not all His benefits.

I have written much more than may be of interest, but it will give you an idea of the things I live on.

Now I hope this finds you and yours enjoying good health which is God's blessings.

I surely enjoy all your articles in the Signs of the Times, and if you have a mind and can find the time, I would be glad to have a letter from you. When at the throne of grace, please remember me, a sinner.

Your unworthy Brother, if one at all,
J. H. Calk

Meadow Grove, Nebraska

Dear Editor and all the dear ones who are responsible for our good paper:

When the *Signs* came yesterday, I leafed through to see who might have written and imagine my surprise and delight to see an article entitled "The Valley of Dry Bones". I have long been hoping someone would either write or speak on that subject, for a good many years ago that was the subject of the first sermon I ever really heard. I was 9 or 10 years old then, and although I had heard many sermons, none had so impressed me with God's great power, and day after tomorrow I will be 89 years old, and I still cherish that memory. How I did enjoy that article. In fact, I had a nap when I first retired last night, then lay awake for hours thinking of the article and continuing to enjoy it.

And now today I have read all the *Signs* but one article, smiling over the "Riddle". The "Sermon Stealer" and the "Grievance" were also good.

My parents and grandparents on both sides of the house were Primitive Baptists, for which I feel to be so thankful. Also two of my Uncles, Elder John Q. Jones, and Elder George J. Jones were Primitive Baptist ministers, but all are gone on to their rest in Him. How I did enjoy sitting near when they all discussed the many phases of the Bible. My folks took the *Signs* for many years, as did my husband and I, and now I take it. My dear husband has been gone since 1971, and he was a firm believer in its principles, as I and our three daughters and one son are. Sure hope and pray you will continue to edit the paper; we need it badly, especially in these troubled times. Again thank you, Elder Poole.

Humbly,
Myrtle Black

December 7, 1980

WORD OF THANKS

Elder Eulie McCool, and his wife, Annie, wish to express their heartfelt thanks to all the brothers, sisters, and friends across the country as well as at home for the many kindnesses shown them recently. It is not possible for them to respond to each one personally at this time.

Elder McCool is presently in the hospital at Columbus, Miss. receiving treatment for a serious illness. We hope the Lord's people everywhere will be blessed to remember them in their prayers.

Editor

FOR THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Philadelphia

December 15, 1835

Dear Brother Beebe: The Philadelphia Baptist Conference met with the first Baptist Church at Hopewell, N.J., according to their previous appointment, on the first Tuesday of this month; public service commenced at 11 o'clock in the morning. We had a very agreeable and highly interesting meeting, and had every reason to believe that God was in the midst of us, and that the interview with that estimable church may be blessed. The religious services continued for three days with increasing interest; deep attention and solemnity prevailed the whole assembly, and strong indications were manifested by many of the most tender, pathetic and contrite feelings; affording a hope that they were pricked to the heart, and anxiously concerned about the interest of their immortal souls, and may it prove the commencement of a special work of the Holy Spirit, among the dear people.

Our beloved Brother Elder Boggs, the Pastor of the church, has been confined by severe indisposition for nearly three months, so as to be unable to attend to

his ministerial labours; which, from his approved talents, long experience and correct views of divine truth, has been no small loss to that church and congregation. It appears to be deeply felt by many, and would have been much more so, were it not for the orthodox services of our excellent brother, Elder C. Suydam, who is a member of that church. We were highly gratified to find brother Boggs, towards the close of the meeting, so far convalescent as to be able to meet with us, and take part in our services, although he appeared very feeble. May the Lord restore him to the dear people of his charge.

On the last day of the meeting, at the unanimous desire of the Church signified to the Ministers present, Alfred Earl, a valuable and gifted young brother, licensed about twelve months since, an approved and highly acceptable member of the church was set apart to the work of an evangelist by solemn ordination, imposition of hands and prayer, according to the practice general among Particular Baptists. The services were peculiarly solemn and refreshing. The ordination service was as follows: Introductory prayer and sermon by Elder Theophilus Harris, Pastor of the North Seventh Street Baptist Church, Philadelphia, from Acts 25:17, 18; Examination of candidate by Elder John Boggs, Pastor of the first Hopewell Church, N.J.; Ordaining Prayer by Elder James Osbourne, of Baltimore, Md., and the Imposition of Hands and Charge to the candidate by Elder James P. Bowen, Pastor of the Baptist Church at Southampton, Buck's County, Pa. After singing, Benediction was pronounced by the Candidate. The audience manifested a deep interest on the occasion, and many were greatly affected during the different exercises--especially at the relation of Brother Earl's religious exercises and experience--his call to the work of the ministry, and his evangelical views of the glorious doctrine of Free and Sover-

eign Grace. A number of the members of the Second Baptist Church attended on the occasion; and we were rejoiced to learn that the members of this church as well as those of First Hopewell, are firmly grounded and established in the faith and hope of the Gospel, and that the vain and deceptive inventions of misguided zealots, or corrupt fallacies of designing men, have not drawn them aside from the ancient Baptist platform, or caused them to swerve from the Truth of God either in doctrine or practice. On the contrary, they appear zealously disposed to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. May the Lord dispose many of our Baptist churches to follow the example of these precious sons of Zion, as far as they have followed Christ.

Yours in Gospel Bonds,
Theo Harris

Signs of the Times
January 15, 1836

FROM KENTUCKY

Madisonville, Ky.

Dear Editors,

Find enclosed a check for two years renewal for the *Signs of the Times*. Use the remainder as you see fit.

I enjoy the paper so very much. I look forward to it coming each month. It contends for the truth that I believe. I especially enjoyed Elder Poole's article in the September number.

I need the prayers of God's children everywhere. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Mrs. S. G. Harralson

Elders Gold and Lester,
Dear Brethren:

I have a desire to write to you and the readers of your paper concerning our faith; for it is said that Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith. This faith is the faith of God's elect. It is also

the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have received faith as an inheritance by being created in Christ Jesus or adopted into the family of God. Paul said, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, made of woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;". And this makes us new creatures in Christ. Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. I do not know how much these all things embrace, but I think they embrace the whole creation of God, both of nature and of grace. And why? Because when the creature is made new he can for the first time see the world and the fulness thereof, praising God. David said, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." So the whole creation is praising God, but we do not see it until we are brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. For it is said, "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord: and thy saints shall bless thee," showing very clearly that all things that were made or created were for the glory of His Name.

It seems to me that faith connects us to Christ, or makes known all of the divine knowledge we ever receive. That faith in a sense, is ours, yet it is the product of the Lord and closely related to Him and cannot be separated from Him. Daniel said, "My God has sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths." One said, "Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth one is like the Son of God." Paul said, "It was faith that quenched the violence of fire". This shows very clearly that faith is the very authority of God, and in every instance it executes the work of God. For we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

We might with propriety call faith the messenger of God. It is said that Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament which include the creation of the world and the fulness thereof. It is thought that he had nothing of an earthly character to go by. Then it is evidently by faith that Moses gave the account of the creation of the world. For it is said, "Through faith we understand the world was framed by the word of God." So faith was in the world almost from the beginning of the world, though the word "faith" occurs but twice in the Old Testament. The first manifestation of faith was in Abel, and it was manifested time and again all through the days of the Prophets until the coming of Christ, and he was the very embodiment of faith, and faith makes known every thing that pertains to our salvation. The Spirit of Christ or faith that was in the Prophets brought everything to their understanding that was necessary for them to know. The Prophets made no mistake, for the Lord was the author of their prophecy, so it had to be fulfilled in time and place in order to show that the Lord is upright, for it is said, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne."

It seems to me that the throne of God is established here in the church, not only collectively but individually. So the judgment is here, and it is going on daily, and we realize it in our experience. The reason we are not consumed is because Jesus is our Advocate, for it is said, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." So in a divine sense there is none of the church righteous. For the Lord is our righteousness. So we are made righteous in Jesus, then we have nothing to glory in of ourselves; but we glory in the Lord. Paul said, "By the grace of God I am what I am", so by grace we are the manifest children of God, so grace makes the difference between the children of men; for it is said, "For who maketh thee to differ

from another, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" It is also said that we receive grace for grace. Grace is favor; so this grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. It is manifested to us in time. Because this grace was given us in Jesus before time began is the prime reason why we receive it in time. Then we are indebted to the Lord for His mercy. We have nothing on our part to pay with, but the Lord sometimes gives us hearts of thankfulness for his mercy, and then we can render the tribute of praise to His great Name, which is a sweet savor unto the name of Jesus. For at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus is our great Spiritual Joseph; for the children of Israel bowed to Joseph, for he was the glory of Pharaoh, and his kingdom. Much more is Jesus the glory of His Father, and if we be the children of God, we are the glory of Jesus. "And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee, and that rejoicing will never cease, but will continue forever." The Apostle said, "And it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." For we only see Jesus in part while we remain here in this life, but the complete knowledge of Jesus and His salvation will be fully realized when we quit the stage of action.

It is thought by some that we will not only be like Jesus in appearance, but like Him in knowledge. If we be like Jesus in knowledge, we will know Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the redeemed of the earth. I think we will not only know them to be saints, but we will know them by name, though the ties of nature will be dissolved; for the question was asked of Jesus, "Whose wife shall she be of the seven. But in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven."

God is reconciled to us by the death of his Son, but we are only in part reconciled to the will of God in this life. When we die we will be fully reconciled to the will of God, and the condemnation of the wicked will not annoy us in the least.

Asa D. Shortt

January 2, 1903

(Submitted by Elder N. F. Connor)

FROM FLORIDA

Tampa, Fla. 33604

Dear Elder Williams,

I greet you in the name of our Sovereign Lord.

I have read the *Signs of the Times* and articles by the late Elder Gilbert Beebe in the "Old Faith Contender" and in your paper. These were handed down by friends such as Elder Glen Shoults, a friend of Elder Fulton, and other Old School brethren.

I have always enjoyed the *Signs of the Times*, but I have just now got around to writing for a subscription. A check is enclosed for a subscription.

I thank God for leading me by His grace to the *Signs of the Times* and all it means to me.

(Elder) Charles W. Mount, Jr.

Lillie, La.

Sept. 28th, 1955

Dear Brother Calk,

I received your real good and highly appreciated letter yesterday with your contribution to me, and I feel to thank you for your kind remembrance of me, and I do not feel in the least worthy of your thoughtfulness and kindness at all, and yet I desire to thank you for your great kindness to me. I hope that you and your family are well, and continue to be blessed of the Lord in health, and every other way according to His Holy will and purpose. We are all very well I believe at this time. I have just attended our Association, and I must tell you I

certainly felt that we were wonderfully blessed with good, humble and comforting preaching, if I know anything about it. Wish you could have been there with us.

We had people from 8 different states, ranging from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, and we had 14 or 15 preachers, I believe, including our home preachers. I am sure you would have greatly enjoyed being there with us, and still I know that you have to try to hold your job to earn a living for yourself and family. May be that when you reach retirement you can have an opportunity to be with our church people more, at least I hope so. I think of you and many others who are not privileged to be with us regular, and I hope it may please the Lord to strengthen you, comfort and lead you through all the dark trials and afflictions of this low ground of sin and sorrow, and bless you to look away from this present evil world, and to look to the Lord who has so sweetly and comfortingly said, "I will be with thee always even unto the end of the world, and I will never leave nor forsake thee." All such sacred and sublime promises are sweet and comforting to the Lord's little children here below.

It is so dark and dreary at times here with the Lord's people. We are told that the Lord chose His people in the furnace of afflictions; and Jesus said in one place, "In the world ye shall have tribulations", so we are sure if we are what we hope we are that we are to have much and great tribulations. So if we are just blessed with small tokens of evidence and hope that we are of that sweet and precious number who are chosen in the furnace, then we are made to rejoice and trust in Him who is able to save us to the utmost. So, Dear Brother Calk, isn't it a sweet and precious heritage indeed to hope in one who is able to save, does save and has and will save His little humble and trembling ones who have been made to know their dependance, depravity and sinful condition. If it were

not for this sweet and precious hope that the Lord gives His people, it would be miserable indeed for every one who has been taught that they are such helpless and dependant sinners.

So, dear and precious Brother, may the Lord enable us to look up to Him who has all power in Heaven and earth, and who holds the keys of Hell and death, and who has so sweetly declared to His people, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also." O, dear Brother, how I do long for that precious and glorious day, when the Lord shall come and say to His people, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." O, dear Bro., how I do hope we are so Graciously Blessed from eternity, through our Lord Jesus Christ to be in that blessed number; for then there shall be peace, love, joy, and pleasures forever and ever more world without end.

I hope to see you before too long. I come to Monroe once in a while on business, and I will try to come by to see you then, the Lord willing. And I would be glad to have you visit us anytime you can. I seldom ever go or pass in the vicinity of Little Rock, but if I did I would be glad to see you there, the Lord willing. Pray for us, write us, and come to see us. May the Lord bless you and your family, together with all the household of faith everywhere, that we may abide in Him, in hope. I am your brother I hope. R. W. Rhodes.

Floyd, Va.
June 9th

Dear Brother Noel:

Hope you and all are as usual, as for my self I'm feeling as good as I expect to feel at my age. Brother Noel, as you write about your unworthiness and feelings in self, I also feel and witness and experience the same, as you say, for

in him we live, move and have our being. I have very often thought of this Scripture and hope in spite of all our unworthiness is surely in him for he is all our Salvation, and hope I love your letters and witness with so many things you write of, the things I understand and hope we are Brother and Sister in Christ, but as far as I see in my self I'm as nothing and cannot have a good thought. I guess you all are planning for our Communion. I do look forward and hope for the best. Hope all will be well and the weather will be nice.

Please write me when you feel to for your letters speak my own feelings and life but I am not able to put in words my life and feelings. I feel our life is hid in Christ our Lord. I've thought on this Scripture but at the present time I am not able to report.

Myrtle T.

STRONG FAITH

To the Editors of the Gospel Standard,

Sirs,—In looking over the first number of the "Gospel Standard," I was certainly gratified to perceive the confidence with which some of the writers assert their certainty of salvation, etc. etc. The most valuable legacy which Jesus, "the true God and eternal life", has left to them who believe in His name is, "good hope, through grace" which enables them to look beyond the cares and sorrows of a vain world, rejoicing in the hope of a glorious immortality beyond death and the grave; and the highest attainment which the humble Christian, walking in the light of his Father's countenance, can arrive at on this earth, is, when he attains to that "assurance of faith", which enables him to "rejoice all the day" with undisturbed confidence in the smiles of his Redeemer's face. The promises of God are all Yea and Amen, to the believer in Christ. Every word of the Messiah, and of his appointed messengers to the

churches, is calculated to give "strong consolation", and full assurance of hope even to the end, to those followers of the Lamb who, by grace, are taught to yield obedience to the doctrines of the cross.

I should certainly be the last person in the world to detract one iota from the assurance, or confidence, of the strongest believer; but I would humbly suggest that, having a strong faith in the testimony of God is one thing, and boasting of our individual confidence and security is another. Of late years, I have been especially disposed to think with great caution respecting those persons who make this boasting, or vaunting, or talking with dogmatical confidence, about their certainty of salvation, as the reward of their strong faith; and I have met with many who make no scruple about dooming the whole human race to eternal damnation, except the few who are disposed to adopt their own peculiar strong language. It is true, that Job is represented as being enabled to say, whilst suffering under the severest agony of mind and body, magnified into torture by the keen reproaches of his friends, in spite of his accumulated sufferings, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and not another", etc. It is true also, that the Apostle Paul, in the probable prospect of being torn in pieces by wild beasts, for bearing testimony in support of the truths of the gospel, in the immediate prospect of a cruel death, was enabled to say, "I am now ready to be offered, and the hour of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day", etc. These are glorious examples, and calculated to encourage the weak believer to emulate

the Apostle's faith, and practice of obedience; that he also may be able to look death in the face with humble resignation, and say, "Welcome, thou king of terrors". The enthusiasm of these inspired writers is most sublime; but it is humble. None of that bombastic vapouring that would attempt to crush and trample upon the more timorous of Christ's flock. None of that "manglorifying" spirit which would say, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou"; or, what is, if possible, more wicked; "Stand by, for my faith is stronger than thine". It is the privilege of every Christian to believe implicitly in the testimony of Jesus; to rely with confidence of the fulfilment of his promises; and to be ready at all times to give a reason to every man that asketh him, of the hope that is in him, with meekness and with fear. The stronger that a Christian's faith really is, the less will he be disposed to boast of it; but he will become the more disposed to manifest, by its effect upon his conduct, that faith is not with him a mere profession. Alas for them who say, "Lord, Lord, and do not those things which he has commanded."

Liverpool, August 1835

J. Woodrow

EDITORIAL

"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy. The king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said unto Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save thee; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with

singing.” (Zeph. 3:14-17)

The Sabbath is a beautiful text, a wonderful subject. Rightly understood, the whole of the New Testament is about gospel rest. Before we will ever come to enjoy that rest fully, we must have some understanding of God’s rest from His work. This work embraces everything treated upon in the Old Testament. It is a time of turmoil, strife, law labor, with austere threatenings for not keeping the Sabbath holy. First, let us, as blessed of God, see what God’s work as the creator consisted of, and let us not be threatening our brethren, nor enter into controversy about whether He made this or that, whether he did this or that. To treat the subject so carelessly and unconcerned as to say that God did not make everything that was made, and all for Himself, is forever under the death knell for finding a safe promise of rest. If, in the examination of God’s pre-Sabbath work, He did not make everything that was made, it does not matter how much text book knowledge is poured into the effort, there is absolutely no Sabbath rest for God or man that can ever be conjured up. God nor men can rest in another’s work - only in His own.

There is no need for me to quote an array of Scripture to prove God made all things. Only one is enough; only one will suffice. “All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made”. (John 1:3) Arguing about things is bad enough, arguing against God is worse. Therefore we will not have any of that. In the labor, and also in the past six thousand years since then, there has been nothing to disturb God, the Creator in Sabbatical rest. All of those eons of time with His rest from the natural creation, I am sure that the text before us is a good one, and that our Saviour God is now resting in His love since this rest is a perfect work of Him who is perfect. (Deut. 32:4) Furthermore, since He is to

perfect that which concerns us (Psa. 138:8) I am sure that poor worn out sinners will also rest in Him as children:

“What think ye of Christ? is the test,
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him.

So guilty, so helpless am I,
I durst not confide in His blood,
Nor on His protection rely,
Unless I were sure He is God.”

And thus I left my feeble voice and wield my wobbling pen in defense of the glorious doctrine of God our Saviour, and that He is alright with the natural creation, having began His rest in and from what He created, and is still resting from, and resting in His natural creation knowing and having determined that no particle of that natural creation shall ever keep one whom He chose to bear witness to His saving grace will ever fail of formation as a son of Adam, and consequently shall be made manifest as a son or daughter of the most High God.

Personally, I believe that God made everything that was made, and that He had an object in view worthy of Himself in everything that is a thing. Neither the object nor the purpose has been side tracked in the least degree, even down to a hair breadth, for if He designed to make a thing, and it did not come up to His predetermined specification, I cannot visualize Him as being able to rest with His failure.

In regard to God resting from His work and in His love; an imperfection in any of His work leaves all room and expectation for failure in all of His work. Let me elaborate. I sometimes say both in the pulpit and on the printed page that I have not been called to preach absolute predestination--in fact, I doubt that any other man has such a calling. A man called of God is called to preach the gospel, to preach Christ and Him crucified; to present every man perfect in Christ (I Cor. 2:2; Col. 1:28) That determination of Paul was voiced and useless unless God had declared or

predestinated the end from the beginning. If I have ever felt called and impressed with the divine preaching of the gospel, it was at the beginning, and it is still the same today, to tell sinners of the great salvation that is in Christ Jesus. When a man - any man - yea, if you and you, ever preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified, it is worthless unless the testimony of Christ is true, to wit, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness to the truth". Every truth of the Bible is based on an earlier truth. The first deed leads to another deed; the first step into the bounds of the doctrine takes us all of the way through it. There is not any way, except the one way, which was, and always is, God's way. Never having been anything but a poor country rustic, and even now lingering close around the evening shades with afflictions of the body increasing day by day, I still feel boldly to say that no writer or preacher can get Joseph down to Egypt that he might engage in planting and storing corn for the preservation of much people, except the way God sent him. God purposed him to go that way, and I am not ashamed nor fearful in saying that no man can save the Egyptians, nor the Israelites, unless that way includes the wicked brethren, the wicked wife of Potiphar, the forgetful butler; and yet that in each case they were thoughtful of themselves in the satisfying of their own lusts.

Ah, yes, I say again, although I probably will have to run the gauntlet of unjust criticism, that unless I am mistaken in my calling, my impression, my experience from beginning until tonight, as I write, that it is to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Again, I could not have preached the first time had God not had control of everything under the sun to that end. Also, it is that way with the effectual callings; it is that way about the preservation of the saints to glory, it is that way in regard to the

predestination of the saints to glory; it is that way about the resurrection of the dead. All of these doctrines are the solid truth of God, and to preach Jesus Christ, for me to rest in His love and in His work, is for me to have equally so from Him that the fixedness of one of them lays the inevitable decree of God and carries with it that each one and all of them are predestinated of God. This is why God rested from the six days of work. Everybody knows how you study about an unfinished work. There can be no rest, no safety, no security for any of the work, unless all of the work is finished. I am sure; I am without a lingering doubt, but that He had everything pertaining to the salvation and deliverance of His people perfectly finished before He rested.

What a beautiful thought Zephaniah has presented to us of our God. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people". What will it take to comfort God's people? I cannot rest for a moment in His everlasting love unless I am equally assured that He has everlastingly fixed everything. To poor finite mortals there is nothing more disturbing than the unknown road, the uncertain quality and quantity of that with which we have to deal. Every farmer, every businessman, is non-plussed about every crop, every new order of business because of the unknown facing him. How sad it is to hear people talk so convincingly (?) of their relationship with God, and yet neither He nor they are sure about the outcome. There is no rest to a child of God in any such doctrine. God Himself, could never rest in His love in behalf of our salvation if He did not know and determine beforehand what the actions of those that He did not love would be.

But I know the unspoken harsh criticism of those who do not believe in the absolute sovereignty of God. They tell me with a glow of smugness and placidness in their countenance that they believe that God knows the future

of all things, but that He did not predestinate all things, but that He works accordingly along with His foreknowledge. My Lord and my God! How misleading such a thought is to me. What? God foreknows all things, but He did not have anything to do with predestinating or establishing or fixing or limiting them? Tell me, dear reader, dear brethren, how in the name of reason could God ever rest in His love with such a horrible spectre facing Him at every turn? He knows adversities are coming; He knows that the foreknown things outside the pale of His determination can come up and bring things about that would destroy the welfare or the future home of one of those that Christ died for? Is that what you mean when you deny the unlimited sovereignty of God? Is that what you really mean when you say that since God foreknows all of these things that finally and eventually no one of His children will ever be lost. That reduces Him to a puppet held in tow by Satan who holds the string on Him. How sad; how eternally insecure has God been; no relationship with wickedness save that He knows about it; no control over it, save that He knows about it. It is in existence, although He knows about it, and it is presumed that He knew while He was before all things that it would come, but that He was helpless to keep it from coming. Yet He knew about it; He did not desire it to come, He did not have any purpose in it coming, but He knew it was coming, and He had to stand by and see it enter into the world, while He hated it, and would much rather it not enter, yet He stood by and it came into existence in spite of His opposition; His hatred to it.

God rest in His love when He had in all the universe a principle of sin that is engaged in opposition to one sinner being saved! There is not honor to be accorded such a weakling as God is, if that doctrine has a semblance of truth in it; there is no rest to God, and moreover

no rest to the family of God, nor any rest to be had anywhere in this world or in promise for the next one, if this is true.

God is not resting in the fact that He has been and is continuing to out-manuever Satan, to out-wrestle him and obtain liberty for His people. Perish the thought! But He is resting in Himself, resting in His love, in His six days of work, in His having gotten the victory on the high and exalted Mount Calvary as the Man, Christ Jesus the Lord was put to death. I am sure that the prophet by the inspiration of God had the nucleus of the rich and glorious doctrine of redeeming love. The basis and foundation of this doctrine is in the finished work of God. Not one thing has been left out of His counsel. If so, no rest for God, no rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, no keen anticipation of the coming day when all of His blood-washed throng will be gathered home, and based on such a weak system of salvation at this, I look back at Calvary and I am sure there was not joy for our dying Saviour, as there cannot be any rest for God in His love.

As God rested from His work in creation, thus bringing in the approved Sabbatical year of gospel rest, I look from that great and outstanding event in the history of the ancient world, and I look down from there across from the vista of the ages, and I see a great historic event transpiring in the rest and the completed salvation of God's family.

I beg you to travel back one step with us and we find the prophet being moved by the inspiration of God to write and to treat upon one of the most restful topics that has ever engaged the mind of man. He says "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and ye shall call his name Immanuel, which, being interpreted is God with us." (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23) Everything that the devil could muster was engaged to outwit God, but God was with us. God being in

the whole assembly of the first born, what could occur to cause the saints misery and unrest? It being God with them (us), yea, it having been God there in a body of flesh, what would have kept Him in the thousands of years, and the myriad and sundry events of all that time from resting in His love? It was He who was there; certainly God had not sent an emissary on this important work; He came Himself, and He was One with us. How conclusively He sealed the destiny of all those that boast of their power, of what they can do. All free-willism, all self-righteousness coming from wherever it may, received a death blow. "Thou couldst not have any power against me save it be given thee from above." (John 19:10, 11) Talk to me about God resting in His love, but every blood-bought sinner is resting in His love; not in their love, nor in any other of the many works of faith, but in God's love.

Thousands of years ago God came down and wrought salvation in the earth. Ever after the saints rested in that love. Abraham saw and rejoiced in it; the Hebrew children had Him with them in the fiery furnace and rested through all of that fiery persecution; Job received from his Redeemer sustenance and a reconciled waiting and resting in hope of seeing Him for himself and not another.

When this Saviour was born of His mother by the work of the Holy Ghost, He tarried with her about twelve years. Did you ever notice that He rested that early in what He came to do? He forgot His mother. Have you noticed that she forgot Him for three days journey? Did you notice, after He began doing that which He came to do, that He did not rest in her, but His rest was in doing the things that He was born to do; the things that He came to do? When His mother came back seeking Him, He did not say to her, "Mother, I am safe," but He spoke to them on that occasion, as He did on other occasions, as though she

was a stranger. Even then, as the Christ lad, He was resting in His Father's business. His meat (food), His delight, His rest, was to be about the work that He came to do.

As He engaged in this work, it was a matter of necessity with Him. "I must work the works of God, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work". The whole work of God in salvation was in His hands. I am not afraid to be positive about this. I find no objective that would be served by me being anything less than positive about this important matter. If, in preaching Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life; if, in coming to you in the *Signs* for nearly fifty years, I had presented a number of secondary matters to you in addition to Christ, there would have been no truth in it; there would have been no gospel in it; yea, there would have been no rest in it. Had He left off the least thing in His work which His Father sent Him to do, I seriously doubt that He would have gotten back to His Father. I do not want to sound off on that, but His father was well pleased in Christ; He was trusting in Him, if you please; He was resting in Him, and He did receive Him back into His bosom. I do not know whether He would have received Him back had He failed to do His will, but I do say that had He failed His Father would not have been pleased, and God's displeasure would have been everlastingly known in heaven. You say as to whether it would be restful to look forward to, or as to whether it would be restful for a poor sinner to spend eternity in an unrestful atmosphere.

In conclusion, I know that such cannot be. Let me change that phraseology, and say that it could not be that way. It was fixed, predestinated, purposed in Christ, that He finish the work which His Father gave Him to do for therein He (Christ) found meat, food, delight, rest, and His Father has rested in His eternal love for His children,

which love was manifested in Him sending Christ into the world, and verified by His dying words, to wit, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

There is no other doctrine that sets Him forth as the God of poor sinners. Anything short of this in what is called time means that we do not have any dependable rest here, and it means that God never has, and never will rest in His love concerning the salvation of His elect people.

Now a word to one and all. My wholehearted support of this restful God honoring doctrine does not mean that I expect to use predestination as a text every time that I write or preach. It does not mean that I am endorsing everything that is called Absolute Predestination. I never have done that, and God willing, I never will do that, but it does mean that wholeheartedly I do endorse that the Bible abundantly teaches what I prefer to call the sovereignty of God over all His creation, but if you had rather call it Absolute Predestination, then I wholeheartedly endorse your right to do so, and you are my brother and my sister, if, indeed, I am a brother.

Furthermore, my unlimited endorsement of the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty or predestination does not mean three things, to wit:

1. I do not declare non-fellowship for any dear brother and sister that is not able to see and understand predestination as I have outlined in this article.

2. This does not mean in any sense that I believe or condone the doctrine that God is the Author of my sins.

3. This does not mean that I will not quote, believe, or even use as the best I can, any text that is in the Bible, going so far as to say that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and that all of it is profitable, and that God has said what He meant to say.

Now in conclusion let me say that for fifty years I have read the *Signs*, and for nearly that many years I have been

writing for its pages. I do not think that I am wrong when I say that I have examined ninety percent of the issues that have been published since that memorable day in October, 1832. During that time the editors and contributors have differed on various portions of the Bible. However, with but a couple of times nobody has run off home with the only glove that we had to play with, saying, "If you do not play according to my rules, you will not be able to play at all."

Dearly beloved brethren, none of us are perfect (or am I mistaken in my assumption)? This is our only paper. Will you stand by and see it destroyed? For years I have solicited subscribers for it; for years I have solicited brethren and sisters writing for it. In the last thirty seven years I have, by the grace of God and by His tender mercy, been closely associated with Elder Spangler. Not the first time has he reprimanded me for not writing, nor has he found fault with what I did write. Elder Dodson told me when I joined the staff of the *Signs* at his earnest solicitation, that my writing would never have an editing pencil used on it unless it was a grammatical mistake that I had made. No one has ordered me around in these fifty years of reading its pages and writing for them. Nor has anybody been sending out guidelines for me to follow in my writings. As far as I know, I have not been denied access to all business matters pertaining to the *Signs*. I have not been to any meetings, nor have I sought to be. At the outset, Elder Dodson told me that all that he expected of me was to keep them supplied with copy for the *Signs*. I have tried to do that, and God being my helper, I will continue to do that.

I did not always agree with Elder Dodson, but we had a kind brotherly agreement in the beginning and our relationship was as pleasant as it has been with any minister among us about anything. For forty years I have been

intimately and familiarly acquainted with Elder David Spangler. We agreed years ago that we would be frank and cooperative about any matters concerning the *Signs*. I feel sure that no friction has entered into our relationship, and we have served churches together; I have baptized candidates for him at Dan River when he was unable, physically, to do so; we have jointly served two churches for a number of years; we have officiated at communions together; we have both gone into the water together and have both in joint action baptized candidates together. To be sure, we have not always seen everything just alike, and in those cases I would say to him, "David, I do not see that like you do," or he has said to me, "Dorris, I think this is a better way", and my testimony today after this close laboring together in the common cause of the churches and the paper, let us all lay down our bickering and let us go on to perfection.

Your little brother, trembling,
but pursuing,
Elder W. D. Griffin

FROM WASHINGTON

Olympia, Washington

Dear Editors of the *Signs*,

Enclosed is a check for a two-year renewal subscription to the *Signs of the Times*, and please use the balance as you see fit.

I so enjoy reading the wonderful articles written by so many dear ones who are given such depth and insight into scriptural messages. I am surely blessed beyond words to know the fellowship of this spiritual communion with these dear ones of like Faith.

May you be blessed continually to feed those who hunger after righteousness through the columns of the *Signs*.

A Sister in Hope,
Alma F. Coate
(Mrs. Gilbert L.)

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

The following article published in The Lone Pilgrim, Vol. 6, Selma, N.C. May, 1928, No. 64.

Dear Brother Hutchens:

I am sending you the first article I ever wrote on the subject of Predestination. It was published in The Gospel News, April 1900. I have never changed in the least from the position I then held on this doctrine.

J. C. Sikes

PREDESTINATION

By Elder Jonas C. Sikes

Sulphur Bluff, Texas

I think it is hurtful and wrong to make a hobby of any one point of doctrine (even though it be the truth) to the exclusion of all others, yet I think we should preach a full gospel and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. But I think it is the best, yea, the wisest and only scriptural course, when speaking on this or any other subject (and especially when we know that some of the dear saints differ from us), to be kind and gentle and meekly instruct them. It has been said that "good words do more than hard speeches." The warm sunshine on a spring morning will make the farmer pull off his overcoat, while all the blustering winds of winter will only make him draw it closer to him. If we would do like Solomon, we would seek to find out acceptable words, yet we should not go so far in that direction as to forsake the truth. He says, "The preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which is written is upright, even words of truth". I think this would be a wise course for all of God's ministers, and I desire to follow it.

With this much said, I now desire to say something on the subject of predestination. I desire that after my departure my friends may have my views on this all-important subject. I think that the statement in the London Confession of Faith with reference to this subject is

highly correct, i.e., that "this high mystery of predestination should be handled with special prudence and care." How well I shall be able to succeed in doing this, will be left for your readers to judge.

Predestination means a previous purpose or a previous determination. Webster defines it as the "purpose of God from eternity respecting all events." I accept this as its true meaning. Yet Webster was only a man and must not be considered as infallible in divine things.

This doctrine can never be understood as long as we try to measure it by anything short of God himself. The nearer we come to an understanding of him, what he is, and the nature of his divine attributes, the nearer we will come to a full and complete understanding of this doctrine.

1st. God is eternal. Hence, His purposes or determinations must also be eternal, if He is eternally perfect in all his attributes. I shall not claim that His purpose is an attribute, but it is the outgrowth (to say the least of it) of wisdom. And here I would note that when I say wisdom, that I do not mean knowledge. Wisdom is one thing and knowledge is another, as you will find by consulting the 11th chapter of Romans. Wisdom in man is that natural attribute by which he is enabled to study or investigate and find out things which he would not otherwise know. Hence, when he gets to the limit of his wisdom or intellectual powers in an investigation he can go no farther; he has found out all he can know about it. But if his wisdom had been perfect, he would have seen through the whole thing at a glance the first time it was presented to his mind. Hence, his knowledge of it would have been perfect. God being eternally perfect in wisdom, has known all things. I shall not claim as to the order of time that God's wisdom is older than his knowledge, for then I would set up for a time a God of wisdom without any knowledge.

But I will say that in the order of thought, wisdom is the real basis or foundation of all knowledge. Wisdom is the basic attribute of the Deity, by which he is governed in all his other attributes. Without wisdom, power would be misused, love would be without a true guide, justice and judgment could not exist, mercy would be a misnomer; in fact, chaos would reign supreme, and "God" would be a name for nothing. So then, wisdom being the foundation of all that is right, I desire upon this foundation to build my structure.

It has been suggested by some that if we could prove that the first transgression was predestinated, then the predestination of all things could be established. So to this end I shall first direct my attention. In the first place, I would ask, Did not God know that if he made Adam as he did and placed him where he would be subjected to the evil influence of the serpent, that he would transgress? If not, where is the perfection of his wisdom? If he did, why did he make him and place him thus? Was it because he was not able to make a perfect man? One that would not yield to temptation? One that could not be corrupted? If so, where is the perfection of his power? If he did not have the power then, and has never, nor will never increase in power, will he ever be able to take a poor, fallen wretch and make a perfect and incorruptible man out of him? I suppose, however, that all who claim to be Primitive Baptists will admit that he had both the wisdom and power to have had it different, if he had wanted it different, but this would be an admission that he did not want it different, which would be to say that he wanted it to come to pass as it did. These are self evident facts. If God wanted it to be different from the way it came to pass is it not remarkably strange that he arranged things so that he knew that it would not work out as he wanted it when he could only have thought how he wanted it to be and said let it be so and it

would have been so? It is a self evident fact that needs no argument to prove it, that either the introduction of sin into the world was according to God's purpose, or else the whole covenant plan of redemption, the advent of Christ into the world, all of his righteous life, all his sufferings and death, His resurrection and ascension are not the result of God's free and independent purpose, for it was to redeem man from the consequences of this act and its outgrowth that all the above took place. Hence, if the transgression was not a part of God's eternal purpose then it follows that the covenant of redemption owes its existence (not to the free and independent purpose of God outside of any extraneous influence, but) to the act of a man by which it was made necessary and a way opened up for it to enter. So in order of thought it would stand thus: 1st. God determined to make a man. 2nd. He saw that man would transgress. 3rd. He devised a plan of redemption. This cuts God's purpose in two, and sets them thus: 1st. God's free and independent purpose to create man. 2nd. God's knowledge of man's independent act in transgression. 3rd. God's necessitated purpose to redeem man, influenced by what he foresaw. If we follow this stream to its end where will it empty? If God had rather sin had not entered the world then it follows that there has never been one single act, or creature, or thing, in this universe that has been as God originally would rather have had it; because, every act, creature, or thing, has been in some way affected by sin, which God had rather had never existed. Even the earth, with which every living things has to do, was cursed because of transgression, which God would rather have had different. Not even one act of the holy son of God was as God would rather have had it for His acts were to redeem sinners, when God had rather there had been no sinners to redeem. Nor throughout all eternity can

anything be as it would have pleased God to have had it, for it will be one eternal song and shouts from redeemed sinners praising Him for their redemption, when God had rather that man had not sinned, then there would have been no redemption from sin and no shouting of praises by redeemed sinners. I shall trace this stream no farther at present, for I see from its course that it empties into the broad ocean of infidelity.

But all of the above is true and much more that might be said, if God did not purpose that sin should enter the world. It is said that God foreknew that man would sin and he therefore made arrangements to meet it. But stop, my brother, this "therefore" is what I object to. It says that the foreseen act of man was the cause of God making the covenant, so you see at once that if this act of man was not embraced in God's purpose then the origin of the covenant is owing partly (to say the least of it) to something outside of God, or His purpose. This branch empties into the stream which we have just left, so we will quit it. You say God foreknew that man would sin, so say I. But I would ask upon whom did this foreseen act of man then depend? Man as not yet created, and his existance depended yet wholly upon God and the fulfillment of His purpose and surely none can think that man's act could ever have been had there been no man to act. So then, this foreseen act of man could not have been any less dependent upon the fulfillment of God's purpose for existance than was the man by whom it was to come.

Having thus far confined myself to what seems to be self-evident facts and irresistible conclusions, I will now notice some scripture on the subject.

I will first call attention to Gen. 1:28 "And God blessed them and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it." Now, the word replenish means to fill up. From this it will be seen that instead of God meaning for them to remain in the

garden, He meant for them to fill up and inhabit the entire earth. To this we will add the 29th verse. "And God said, Behold I have given you every herb-bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, it shall be to you for meat." In the first place, we see from this, that man was intended to inhabit the entire earth, from the fact that the fruits that grow on all the face of the earth were to be for meat to him. And in the second place, we see that the fruit of every tree on earth was to be to them for meat. Some questions might arise in our minds right here. Was there any such a tree in all the earth that yielded fruit as the tree of knowledge of good and evil? If so, was it to be for them for meat? If not, what does the above language mean? But I will pass this for the present.

We next call the attention to Acts 17:24-26. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with man's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life and breath and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation." It is clearly seen from this as well as from Genesis, that God's purpose was (not that man should remain in the garden, but) that he should dwell on all the face of the earth. This is what Paul says that he made them for. Much might be said right here, but this article is going to grow lengthy, so I must pass on. I will now call your attention to Gen. 2:5. "And there was not a man to till the ground." The next verse tells of God watering the earth and making man. Now, what would we reasonably conclude from the above scripture, was God's purpose for making man. I think all reasonable men would say, "to till

the ground." The other passages referred to show that God purposed that man should dwell on all the face of the earth and all of the fruits of the various trees thereof should be to them for meat, while this one shows that God purposed that man should till the ground. Some say, "O, yes, this is all true, but it is because God foresaw that man would transgress, that he purposed to scatter them on all the face of the earth and have them till the ground." But then we would be forced to admit one of two things, i.e., that this foreseen transgression was a part of God's original purpose, or else the cause of this purpose to scatter them on all the face of the earth and that they should till the ground, was outside of both God and His original purpose to make man. This again resolves itself into the absurd position which we have already noticed; 1st. That God freely and independently purposed to make man. 2nd. That he foresaw that man would not do as he wanted him to. 3rd. That God was governed in all of His other purposes concerning man, both for time and eternity, by the foreseen act of man rather than his own sovereign and independent will and choice. But I must quit this part of the subject and notice for awhile the reason why God created all things. It is said by Solomon that "the Lord has made all things for himself, yea even the wicked for the day of evil." From this we learn that he made all things for himself. It is said in Revelations that "Thou hast made all things for thyself and for thy pleasure they are (now exist) and were created." From this we find that they were all created for His pleasure, and they are still existing for the same purpose. In Colossians it is said "All things were created by Him and for Him." This is enough to prove that God had a use for all that He created. Now it is admitted by all that some men come into the world sinners, they live in sin and they die in sin and go to eternal perdition.

Will someone please tell me whether or not God's purpose in creating them is or will be fulfilled in them?

God's purpose in time and all created things is, I think, for the manifestations of His own glory. In other words, to manifest Himself in all of His divine perfections and manifestly glory Himself in all of His attributes. Now, we read of His own eternal purpose, His immutable counsel, the counsel of His will, etc., so in order of thought we say that God held a council in eternity. He was guided by wisdom, and consulted His own will. In this council was considered all things that He now works after the counsel of His will. As a result of that council the world was created and all things therein. Now look at this creation as it fell from the plastic hand of the creator. Is it not wonderful? Yea, marvelous? But how many of the attributes of the Deity do you see manifested in this wonderful work? Only two, wisdom and power. Wisdom to contrive this wonderful plan and power to perform it. Wisdom and power are here manifested as being infinitely great, but love, mercy, justice, wrath, and His immortal purity is yet unknown to man and must remain so as long as man remains in his state of innocence. He can love man just the same in his upright as in his fallen state, but love cannot be manifested in its fullness so as to glorify God in this attribute. "If ye love them that love you what reward have ye: do not even the publicans the same?" So God's love could not be manifested in its fullness on them that loved Him. "Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die," so if Christ had died for a good man it would have manifested no more love than perhaps some men would have done, so then it must be true that for God's love to be manifested in its fullness man must fall from his good and upright state. Man fell, and it is said that "God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ

died for us," also, that "God who is rich in mercy, for His great love where with He loved us even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ." Here we have His great love most gloriously manifested on fallen man. Next we come to mercy. The above text says, "But God who is rich in mercy" Yes, He is rich in mercy, but how can mercy be bestowed on one who is not a sinner? How could the great richness of God's mercy ever have been manifested without a transgressor? But man transgressed and now God can make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory. Yet notwithstanding the greatness of God's love, and the richness of His mercy, they must have been forever unknown and unappreciated if man had not become a sinner. These two most glorious attributes, however, could not reach the case of, nor benefit, a sinner at the expense, or exclusion, of justice. Justice, in its greatness could not be manifested in a world of sinless, upright beings, but when man transgressed she laid her iron hand upon him; love nor mercy cannot reach him only through justice. Behold what unrelenting justice. Before she will swerve one jot or one tittle she will take the heir of heaven, the only son of the supreme judge, who sits upon the great white throne, and slay him for the crime.

Love and mercy, guided by wisdom, offers him as a ransom. Justice guided by wisdom, accepts him in behalf of all for whom he became surety. But God continues to show His wrath and make His power known on the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. Through all of this we can see God in His true character. His attributes are most gloriously manifested in the creation of the world and His dealings with sinners, and I feel sure that this course has been no second choice with Him. Man may determine to do a thing and seeing that it will not work out as He desired it should, make

some subsequent arrangements to meet and rectify in measure this foreseen, yet undesirable event. But the all-glorious eternal. "I am," has never been so hardpressed as that. But this is exactly the light He must be held in by all who hold that He did not purpose that sin should exist. They must divide His purposes into two sets, anterior and posterior. His anterior purpose being His purpose to create all things, which purposes would be absolutely free from, and independent of, and in no way influenced, or hampered by, any unpleasant foreseen event, which was coming up outside of His purposes. His posterior purposes being all such as relate to man as a sinner. The covenant of redemption. The punishment of sin. In fact, all of His dealings with man as a sinner from the morn of transgression to the eve of eternity would come under the head of His posterior purposes, being made as the result of, and to meet and deal with, an unpleasant foreseen event, which was coming up outside of, and in no way attributable to His purpose. Such a petty God may do to speculate upon, but it is not the God before whom the four and twenty elders fell down in wonder and admiration, and cast their glittering crowns before His throne, shouting, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." The man who believes that the transgression was a foreseen event not embraced in God's eternal purpose, and that the covenant was made to meet this exterior foreseen event, must admit that God has anterior and posterior purposes. And that His anterior purposes are based on an interior cause (the counsel of His will), and His posterior purposes are based on an exterior cause (an unpurposed foreseen event). We are all bound to admit that in the order of thought God's knowledge of man's transgression was based on His

determination to make man, for had there been no determination to make man there would have been no knowledge that there would be a man to transgress, and if there had been no knowledge that there would be a man to transgress there would have been no covenant made to redeem man for transgression. So we are forced to either take the position that it was all from start to finish embraced in God's eternal and unchangeable purpose, or that He has anterior purposes based upon interior causes, and posterior purposes based upon exterior causes. The latter is Arminianism straight, so you can see at a glance that I believe in the predestination of all things. I shall not try to add to the strength of this doctrine by the use of the term "Absolute", nor diminish its force by the use of the term "Permissive".

I have neither time nor inclination at present to enlarge upon this subject, for my article has grown too lengthy already. But I will say this much more, if the logic contained herein is true with reference to the first transgression, it is also true with reference to every other event of time. This is my first, and may be my last, upon this subject, but I desired to record my views upon it before I go hence. With me it is either an Almighty God who works all things after the counsel of His will, or no God at all. I fail to find any standing room between this and atheism.

If this scribble should help any poor, halting child to a better understanding of this profoundly deep and mysterious subject I would be glad to hear from them.

With love to all the household of faith I remain a poor, unworthy sinner, saved by grace if saved at all.

Elder J. C. Sikes

We can never be truly easy and happy until we are enabled to trust God for all things: and the more we are enabled to trust

Him, the more gracious and faithful we shall find Him.

Toplady

OBITUARIES

CLARA BROWN

Sister Clara Brown was born in Johnston County, North Carolina, October 7, 1903, the daughter of the late Samuel Edward and Minnie Lee Thorton and departed this life September 9, 1979 after several years of declining health.

She married Chester Brown December 19, 1926. Along with her faithful husband, she leaves many relatives and friends to mourn her loss.

Sister Clara Brown asked for a home with Creeches Primitive Baptist Church, March 3, 1973 and was received and baptised by Elder D. B. Stokes. We felt so thankful that God had brought her to us. She attended the Church for many years before He saw fit to bring her into the Militant Church and continued faithful to attend as long as her health permitted her to do so.

She loved the doctrine of Salvation by Grace of God and to hear God's name praised above all else. Her walk on earth was that of loving, humbleness before God and man. We miss her but feel our loss to be her gain.

Her funeral was conducted by her pastor, Elder D. B. Stokes at Parrish's Funeral Home, Selma, North Carolina and she was laid to rest in the family cemetery.

Written by: Sister Mavis P. Pope
Elder D. B. Stokes - Moderator
Jeffrey O. Creech - Clerk

SHERMAN LIGHT

By request of Valley View Primitive Baptist Church, I am writing the memorial of our dear Brother, Sherman Light. During the early twenties, he joined River Hill Primitive Baptist Church in Floyd County and was baptized by Elder John Sumner.

When River Hill Church dissolved in 1951, Brother Light carried a letter to Valley View Primitive Baptist Church in Montgomery County. On September 15, 1951 he was received in full fellowship. He believed in

salvation by grace and enjoyed the fellowship with the brethren. He rejoiced in hearing the old hymns of Zion. He was an old soldier of the cross and loved to attend the meetings.

For several years his health prevented him from coming to the meetings. On several occasions I visited him. When talking with him, playing tapes of services and songs, he seemed to rejoice in them.

Brother Sherman Light was born September 27, 1902 and passed away on June 19, 1980.

Be it resolved that a copy be placed on our church record and one sent to the *Signs of the Times*.

Written in love and humbleness by one who loved him in Christ.

Brother Donald Agee
Elder Raymond Goad, Moderator
Kathleen Martin, Clerk

ROBERSON DILLIARD WOODARD

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to call Brother Roberson Dillard Woodard from our midst, on February 25, 1979.

He was born September 23, 1887 in Johnston County, the son of the late Borna and Mary Thompson Woodard, making his stay on earth 91 years.

Brother Woodard was a firm believer of Salvation by the grace of God. He attended his church regularly until the last two years of his life. Due to his illness, he was unable to attend, but each time we visited he would always ask about the brethren, and always had a desire to relate how good the Lord had been to him.

Funeral services were conducted at Parrish Funeral Home in Selma, by his pastor, Elder D. B. Stokes. He is survived by his wife, Sena Moore Woodard; one son, Roland Woodard of Raleigh; one daughter, Virginia W. Wilder of Middlesex, North Carolina; one stepson, Rudolph Baily of Selma; two stepdaughters, Mildred Woodard of Selma, Ethel Smith of Richmond, Virginia; a sister, Mary W. Stancil; seven grand-children and three great grandchildren.

Brother Woodard shall be missed. It is our prayer that the family and the Creeches Church be submissive to the Will of God.

The Lord that giveth and the Lord that

taketh away, may the name of the Lord be praised both now and forever.

May the spirit of our dear Brother rest in peace to wait; to wit, the Redemption of his body in the resurrection, where we can be like the Lord our Savior and be satisfied in that Kingdom that Jesus has promised his people.

Done by order of Conference of Creeches Church, June 21, 1980.

Elder D. B. Stokes Moderator
Brother Jeffery Creech Clerk

LEAH ATKINSON CREECH

It was the request of Creech's Church for me to write an obituary in memory of my mama, Leah Atkinson Creech and our dear sister. With a very heavy heart by nature, I attempt to write about one whom I loved so much and whose memory I will always cherish and love.

Mama was born in Johnston County on January 27, 1912; the daughter of the late Charlie and Allie Evans Atkinson. She was married to Rodney Lee Creech on January 10, 1931. To this union was born four children, three boys and one girl. Left to mourn her passing are her husband, Rodney Lee Creech; three sons, Thel of Selma, N.C.; Glen of Richmond, Va.; Jerry of Garner, N.C.; and one daughter, Mrs. Joyce Creech of Kenly, N.C.; ten grandchildren, all of whom were very precious to her; and four sisters.

Mama and Daddy together united with Creech's Church on April 21, 1962, and were baptized the following Sunday afternoon by Elder D. B. Stokes, Jr., our pastor. I know she was a firm believer in Salvation by Grace. Mama and Daddy attended church faithfully many years before uniting with the church and continued to be faithful church members. There were very few weekends that they did not attend either their home church or visit a sister church until Mama had a stroke on March 6, 1975, which left her an invalid. She was completely paralyzed on her right side and was never able to speak to us again.

Although Mama was right-handed, she learned to write with her left hand. This is the way we communicated with her for about three years until she became too weak to write. In so many ways, Mama did talk to me these years - by the expression on her face,

shaking her head, smiling, crying or just by the look in her eyes.

Mama could not even eat for almost three years; and we tube fed her. Then she began swallowing milk and a few other liquids which we fed to her with a small syringe until her death.

Mama showed very little discouragement or complaints. There were even times when we laughed together and were made to rejoice in the comfort she gave to all of us. I feel she took her burden of afflictions with an abundance of patience, understanding and a faith that the Lord would reward her one day.

Mama truly enjoyed her many visitors and cards during her sickness. She also enjoyed listening to sermons and songs which we taped for her. Many Sunday mornings when others were gone to church, she and Daddy had church at home by listening to the taped sermons. Before Mama was sick she always enjoyed visiting with the sick and shut-ins. This she did faithfully and was so graciously repaid because Mama had many visitors which she was a shut-in.

Mama was bedridden for four years and eight months. All this time, Daddy cared for Mama at home with help from family members.

The Lord saw fit to call Mama to her Heavenly home on November 23, 1979. With no sign of pain, she left this life very peacefully.

Mama lived a rich and happy life up until she had a stroke. I know Mama thanked the Lord for this and also the many blessings bestowed upon her while she was sick. She was a great wife, mother, grandmother, and a loving friend to all who knew her.

Her funeral was conducted at Creech's Church, Route 2, Kenly, N.C. by Elder D. B. Stokes, Jr., Elder Oliver V. Allen, and Mr. William Weaver. Mama was laid to rest in the church cemetery with a beautiful array of flowers and in the company of many friends and relatives.

May we who love her be submissive to our Lord's will for I know our loss is Mama's gain.

Her daughter, Joyce Creech Creech
Elder D. B. Stokes, Moderator
Jeffrey O. Creech, Clerk

(We find this to be a very touching obituary and hope others will feel what we did in it. Editor)

Signs of the Times

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"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 2/81
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

**"WE ARE THE CLAY, AND THOU
OUR POTTER"**

Oft has my soul in secret pour'd
Her earnest breathings to the Lord,
That he would visit my poor heart
And bid my idols thence depart.

O wondrous love that he should smile
On one so filthy, base, and vile!
Should break my chains and set me free,
And once again deliver me.

The gates of brass my Jesus broke
When to my soul he sweetly spoke;
The iron bars asunder flew
When my Beloved came in view.

I cried, "The favour seems too great
For me in such a low estate
Dear Lord, I've oft forgotten thee,
And dost thou still remember me?"

"Yes, thou art mine, poor soul", he said,
"Thou needest not mine anger dread;
Thy wand'rings well deserve my rod,
But I am still thy faithful God."

"Thy base backslidings I will heal,
And thou shalt sweet contrition feel;
Mourn o'er the sins that made thee stray,
And from thine idols turn away."

Dear Saviour, while I bless thy name
My soul is fill'd with holy shame;
O take my heart and let it be
Content and pleased with nought but thee.

Although thou hast my soul restored,
I cannot stand one moment, Lord,
Unless thou dost support me still,
And give me grace to do thy will.

Thy presence does my spirit cheer,
And makes me hope thou wilt appear
In every future trying case,
Till I behold thee face to face.

Sarah

November 25, 1842

FROM MAINE

Newcastle, Maine

Dear Elders,

I am sorry to have waited for the *Signs* to expire with this month's issue. I have loved the *Signs* for years, as my family did before me for two generations, at least, if not more. But life moves so quickly, it seems, and I can only send in the enclosed check for two more years. The *Signs* always has some message that renews my faith and hope and the familiar communications, though the names are not familiar, bring warmth to my heart because the doctrine doesn't change.

In Love and Hope,
Sister Ruth Clark

EXPERIENCE

Dear Brother Poole:

The other day I received a letter from one of our sisters in the South and the content of it was, of various ways we experience the many things in our life. It gave me much food for thought and I would like to share those thoughts for what they might be worth.

Isn't life itself, one great experience after another? I believe so. Some are more important than others, and as we grow older, we attach more importance to some than to others. I will use my own life as an example, and it seemed to be filled with experiences of all kinds, good and not so good.

When I left home to be married, against the wishes of my parents, that was an experience, and when I found out, a few months later that my parents were right in objecting to me marrying the one I did, because they knew and I did not, he had the reputation of alcoholism, that was a very bad experience, in awakening to the results of being disobedient. But since I had made the step and my husband was a fine man, well liked, a hard worker and loved his family, when he was not

drinking, no one even knew how many hardships we suffered when he did drink and caused trouble to me. He never mistreated the children, nor had disturbances outside the home, for which I was thankful. After 16 years of married life, my husband died of pneumonia, leaving me with 7 children, ages 3 to 16 years old. One period of my life ended and a new experience began. A step into a more stable life, knowing now, what we were doing and how our small finances would be used, wisely and well, from necessity. After 8 years we left the farm we were on. But in that period of time, much had taken place. In 1942 War was declared. Young men drafted. My son just turning 17 wanted to go into the Navy, instead of the Army draft. I signed for him. He was gone 4½ years. That left me and the girls. First I sprained an ankle, then had a nervous breakdown, because I was badly rundown in health. My mother died in 1938 leaving my Dad alone, with my oldest brother and wife, and he often came to see me, for a week at a time. We were always very close to each other and he felt I understood him better than all the rest of his 8 children. During my illness, I had begun to feel the need of something greater in my life than what I had. I had always known and loved the Lord in an ordinary casual way, but I felt a longing for more depth to it. The Methodist Church we had attended all our lives just did not feed me as I needed to be fed; Spiritual Food, from the Master's table. But I was not getting it and I hungered. When Dad visited me, he would bring me copies of the *Signs of The Times*. The first one I read was a real eye opener to me. I never knew anyone preached such beautiful words, just as the Bible said. In language plain enough that even a child could understand. I feasted upon each article. Dad was so pleased, because, he said, "I was the only one in the family that enjoyed the *Signs*, besides him."

And he had taken it with him to another sister's home. But each time he went back, the copy still lay where he had left it. Well, that opened up a grand new experience to me! The way grows brighter!

When I recovered from my illness, Dad wanted me to go with him to the Needmore-Sidling Hill Association, in Pennsylvania. He had to stop going, because he was not able to go so far alone, anymore by bus. As we had responsible work on the farm of making sure the stock was fed and cared for, besides 30 cows to milk, morning and night, I was not certain how our boss would take it, if I asked to go away for a week. But his reply was typical of his fine nature. He told me that the girls had kept everything going while I was ill, those 2 or 3 weeks, and the milk was always ready on time; all the work finished before they got the bus $\frac{1}{4}$ mile away for school. And in the evening, did it all over again, before his son came to get the milk to take to his farm for cooling. He said he knew they would be able to do it alone, for a week, so go ahead and it would do me good. We did go, and I did enjoy every minute of it. We stayed with elderly cousins of Dad's, for we were in his home country! I heard beautiful preaching, such as I had never heard before; Elders Walker, Vaughn, Bellows, Lefferts, and others, each one preaching in pure harmony with the Bible and with each other. Such fellowship and love, I had never experienced! I just couldn't seem to hear enough and what lovely singing of hymns! The week was soon over. A beautiful experience, right from Heaven! Everything and everyone was fine when we got home again. I was much stronger and able to do my share again. But the Lord was busy working with me. Stirring me up as nothing ever did before.

In October there was a 2 day Association at Welsh Tract, where Dad's membership was. Elder Eubanks had baptized him in 1914. We attended

that. There were services Saturday evening in the home of Deacon Charles Jarmon and I heard Elders Jones and Rhodes for the first time. The same doctrine of Salvation by Grace was preached as before. I feasted again. Elder Lefferts was there also. I felt so blest to be there.

In 1943 my brother decided to move away from Dad, onto a farm, and he asked me if I would leave the farm and move in with Dad. That was a great decision for me to make and required much prayer. Since my illness, I had been unable to work in the field as usual, and husk corn and pick tomatoes as I had done every year. One daughter had graduated and another ready to graduate the following year. One was fulltime working on the farm, as it was war time and women were taking men's places on the farms. I knew I wanted a change for us all, as I wanted each one to have the same advantages, with the same education. In my Mother-heart, I prayed to be shown what to do and how I could do it. I could see no answer. We had good benefits on the farm. All the milk we needed, flour to bake bread, 2 hogs each year, a portion of beef, and I raised chickens for half. So we had eggs and poultry, and I had a small sum for taking care of the stock, besides free rent, etc. But all we made extra was always needed for clothing and groceries. So none could be saved. I knew that, and I prayed.

I visited Dad 2 weeks later, after telling my brother I couldn't begin to think of it. As Dad and I visited, he quietly asked me how I would like to come and live with him. There it was again! I had to have an answer. I gave Dad my "excuses" and when I said, if I ever left the farm it would be when I could start to buy a home, not rent, he said, "that's what I mean." He said he would sell me the home place for what he had paid for it in 1920, and he could carry the mortgage. I had no more excuses to give. That floored me. He had

paid \$1,900.00 for it. Now I had the very unhappy job of telling our boss and his son we were moving in three months. I prayed again, for words to use for they were fine people. We were there eight years.

They had several meetings with me, asking if they had done anything to cause us to want to move, and offering more money, more advantages, etc. And I just prayed I would not weaken in my resolve to leave, because I had begun to see that it was God's answer to my prayers. Finally, when the son came to me, separate, to see if I would change my mind, I told him, "Albert, you are young and you can understand how I feel about the girls. One is working on the farm and loves it. Another wants to go into Civil Service in D.C., when she graduates. They both have the same education and I want them to have the same advantages. And now that I cannot do my part to earn money, I do not feel it's fair to them to do it all." Praise God he understood, and no more was said.

We did move. Dad had been entirely alone for a week. And so we began a whole new experience in life, but this time I felt the leading of the Lord in a much greater way. I was beginning to be aware of Him in my every day affairs. Dad was ill for a while and Elder and Mrs. Lefferts paid us a visit on their way to Welsh Tract, and I did so much enjoy them. Later, I got a precious letter from him. The first letter of many he later wrote to me encouraging me. He seemed to see in me, what I felt, and I thought I was the only one aware of how I felt!

On Dad's 80th birthday, my cousin from Virginia came for a visit and she promised Dad she would see that he and I got to Welsh Tract each meeting day. And she kept that promise until after she got married and had children. Then she seemed to fall away and didn't go any more.

The Lord was working strongly within me and would give me no rest

night or day. After the children left for work or school, I would take the Bible, read, and pray and it seemed the turmoil inside would never end. Then one week, when Dad had gone to spend the week with my sister, I had a final battle and Jesus Christ won. By Thursday I was not able to rest at night, and as I lay in bed, not asleep, it seemed I was in a hospital corridor, walking or pacing up and down, trying to sing to patients on cots on either side. I had no tune. I was trying to sing Rock of Ages, but the tune was way off key, and I could not sing right. With head bowed and hands behind my back, I paced toward a light at the far end. The patients were making fun of my singing, but I continued on, not heeding, till as I neared the light, my tune began to ring out true and clear, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy Cross I cling, etc." and I awoke singing that verse, with a light, happy heart. I felt all was now well and I would not be burdened any more.

But the next day, Friday, I was again filled with doubts and fears. Was I trying to make myself believe I was something I was not? I did not want to deceive the dear people of the Church, nor did I want to delude myself, and most of all, I did not want to appear as a hypocrite before God. I knew God would know, so again I went to Him in prayer, to show me what to do and how to do it. That night I again dreamed and awoke singing "Helpless I am and full of guilt, But that for me thy Blood was spilt, O cleanse and make me what thou wilt, And take me as I am." And again I felt that renewal of hope. That priceless hope only God can give.

Dad came home on Saturday and, as I usually did when we had our little chats together, I put a stool near his feet and I showed him the last letters I had that week from Elder Lefferts. He had written many and this last one, he told me if I could find anywhere in the Bible, where anyone was saved by being worthy, he wanted me to show it to him.

I gave Dad this letter and as he read, tears came into his eyes. Looking up, he said, "well?" I said, "Dad, what would you say if I told you I want to be baptized tomorrow?" Tears streaming down, he said he would be the happiest man in the world. Arriving at Church next morning, we were met at the end of the walk by Elder Lefferts. After greeting Dad, he looked at me and said, "Well, Ruth?" My reply was, "I am ready, I am tired of going it alone." It was very humbling to be gathered in loving arms and see tears of joy shed by both he and my Dad. That morning a powerful message was heard, an open door was seen and I entered, and was beautifully, lovingly received. The Baptism was that afternoon in the pond back of Sister Lydia Rittenhouse's home. Hymn page 124 was sung. "How Firm A Foundation" will always be precious to me, as it was sung during and after the baptizing. Full of God's promises to His people (Isaiah 43). An experience never to be forgotten and truly blest of God; An experience of God's marvelous Grace to a sinner. From there, as I looked back, I could see the many ways the Lord had been with me and my family, even when I knew it not, and I've been blest to enjoy many rich crumbs from the Master's Banquet table, sitting as did Mephibosheth, lame in both feet, at the Master's table. He it is that sees the beginning and knows the ending.

Dad fell and broke his hip and no one thought he would ever walk again, but God knew better. Again Elder Lefferts visited. Another blessing. But Dad was determined he would walk and after 6 months, he told us so. My oldest brother went to Sears for a walker, and Dad soon was up and on the move. Later, when he was 84 years old, he had a heart attack, sawing wood. He lived a week, and the Lord called him Home. I missed him very much, but was thankful he did not linger on to suffer.

Just one year, exactly, after I was

baptized, Elder Lefferts was in Heaven, with his Heavenly Father. It was a real shock, and I felt I would not want to go to Welsh Tract anymore! But praise the Lord, I soon saw that I was not worshipping the man, but God, when I found I was just as hungry to hear more the next meeting day, as I ever had been, and I did not ever know who would preach. Elder Berry preached and I was fed by the same manna exactly as at other times, by the Hand of God.

There is a scripture in Romans, that comes to mind as I write. Romans 5:1-5, "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope." This scripture opens up another area of thought, and in my imperfect thoughts, it seems rich in substance. I hope I do not take too long to dwell upon it. Here we find three very necessary attributes a believer must have to lead a full life in Christ. When we consider each one, we know they are often gained thru tribulation and reverses of all kinds. Experiences cover a large area of our lives. Some are best buried deep and never remembered again. In our home, we had resolved in our hearts to be happy, work hard and keep our home together and the Lord did indeed bless us to do so in many wonderful ways. Each move we made was in prayer. A separate experience, and a richer one. We never had material riches, nor did we ever covet such, appreciating each blessing from God as a treasure.

After Dad's hip healed and he got about with a cane, we made many trips to Associations, both to the Virginia Corresponding Meeting in Virginia, and to Salisbury Association, and in May and October, for a week, up in Pennsylvania to the Sidling Hill Meetings. Yes, God was good to us. Precious memories, beautiful experiences, sweet fellowships.

God has many ways of dealing with His people. Some one way, some

another. Sometimes we are brought down deep in illness and/or affliction, and when we are made to see His hand in it, we come up singing Hallelujah to His Name, and praising God, giving Him all the glory. We know it was the Lord's hand that guided the surgeon's knife. We know it was our prayers that kept the surgeon awake all night as he reviewed our desperate case, and later, when it was all over, we give God all the praise and glory. We give the surgeon our blessing for being a channel thru which the Lord could work. Faith and hope go together and work toward praise and glory. We have our hope. That is a beautiful word. Our hope and God's perfect salvation. We know hope springs eternal in the human breast. A believer's hope carried him thru many trying times. The non-believer goes thru these times and calls it "luck" or the "man upstairs". But that shows no knowledge or respect of an to our God in Heaven, nor does it give Him any praise and glory. Ah, my precious Brother, we speak of experiences. Our entire life is full of them! But the greatest one of all is the blessed experience of Grace we have when we come to know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, our Everything!

For many years I had to depend upon myself for so many things in our everyday living and I was so used to having to plan and work out the necessary chores or whatever. But finally, I found there were so many areas in living that were of more importance than just living. The life of living is Christ, and without Him as the center, we just exist. So many people prefer to live that way! In my younger years I was not aware of how my Creator worked in lives. We "hope" the weather will be good. We "hope" nothing will happen to spoil a party for the children, etc. We "hope" as ones not aware. Then as we grow older, things change and we change. Our "hope" is stronger, but still has no real basis.

When we become awakened and begin to take notice of what is causing the change in us, we experience surprises of all kinds. One of these surprises is, we find God's grace and mercy are boundless, His love is all encompassing. No words can describe that, because it is felt, not described. God's love is measureless, and meaningful. There is a depth and fullness to His mercy. He has endless patience. As He gathers us into His enfolding arms, His love reaches thru us, and beyond us to all our associations with our fellowman. I've felt it so strong as I mingle with my brethren everywhere I go. And with believers, wherever I find them. It seems like speaks to like. I've known the love of my parents, especially my Dad, as I grew older, and of all my children. Elder Horace Lefferts was my first spiritual love here on earth. His was a love spiritually that cared for my salvation, and it was a sweet Godly love. I could never feel I was in the least worthy of that love. I knew what I was!

There were many others, of which I will only mention Elders Spangler and Wood and they will always remain very precious to me. It would take too much time and space to mention all the other dear ones. Then in these later years, I've been so blest to number Elder James Poole among those whose love and respect I treasure, knowing my unworthiness to be loved by such saints of God. I do not merit any of it, but it is sweet to experience and I do not ever want to be disloyal or unfaithful to the One who is the embodiment of such love, Christ Jesus my Lord and Saviour.

Another experience in my life. I await with great expectancy and with patience the last and final experience God has for me. That will be when He sends His angels to escort me home to be with Him in Glory! That Home He has prepared for me, not made with hands, forever to be with Him.

"Jesus, the very thought of thee, With sweetness fills my breast,

But sweeter far thy face to see, And in thy
presence rest."

Summing up my lifetime of
experiences, I see many, and they are
varied, but each one special in its own
way and purpose in God's plan for me
and my loved ones.

"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to
perform.

He plants His footsteps in the sea, and rides
upon the storm.

Yes-

He treasures up His bright designs and works
His Sovereign will

And-

His purposes will ripen fast, Unfolding every hour
The bud may have a bitter taste But sweet will be
the flower.

Finally-

God is His own Interpreter
And He will make it plain.

Praise the Lord.

One last scripture comes to mind - Psalm
40:5

"Many O Lord my God, are thy
wonderful works which thou hast done,
and thy thoughts to usward. They
cannot be reckoned up in order unto
thee! If I would declare and speak of
them, they are more than can be
numbered."

Amen!

Lovingly yours,
Sister Ruth Lucht

301 Rives Road
Martinsville, Va. 24112

To the Editors of the Signs of the Times,

Enclosed is a copy of a Circular Letter
of the Pigg River Association written by
Elder J. L. Bocock in 1973.

When I read this letter my eyes
overflowed with tears. So many sweet
memories filled my heart as I recalled
the many seasons of rejoicing while in
company with this dear Brother.

This dear Brother has dropped from
our midst and his whereabouts is
unknown to us. We would like to hear
from anyone that knows; who may
know if he is living, and if living, his

state. Please write. If living, we want
him to know that all that ever loved him,
loves him still and want to help him if he
is in need.

Elder P. E. Ingram

CIRCULAR LETTER

Dear Brethren:

Since the God of all grace has loved us
from eternity with an everlasting love, and
has manifested this by making us new
creatures in Christ Jesus, may we, even here
in this Association, give unto Him the glory
due His Name.

It was God that began the good work in us,
and as sure as He has begun it, so surely will
He complete it—in His own way and time.
Our God is for us, and this is our consolation
under all circumstances.

We shall soon pass through Jordan to the
blissful shores of our heavenly Canaan. Our
Leader, Jesus, has taken possession of that
inheritance for us: He has gone to come
again for us. This should cheer us to the lot of
our inheritance in this vale of tears, assured
that He will lead us on safely until we enter
into that rest where none of the inhabitants
will say, "I am sick". Then the days of our
mourning will be ended.

It is this we are hoping for; it is this we are
waiting for; it is the anticipation of this that
sometimes causes us to rejoice. How delight-
ful it is to the mind of a believer, to think that
this inheritance is infallibly secured to all
the family of God. Brethren, how bright are
your prospects: Your Sun is rising to set no
more. Soon you will receive a palm of victory
and a crown of glory.

You ought to rejoice, though now, if need
be, ye are in manifold temptations. You may
be poor, you may be tried in body and in
mind, you may be sorrowing, but look up,
your redemption draweth nigh.

"A few more rolling suns at most
Will land us safe on Canaan's coast:
Where we shall sing the song of grace,
And see our glorious Hiding Place."

In bonds,
J. L. Bocock

Tyler, Texas

Dear Editors:

Forgive me. I am such a poor writer,
but I want to write a few lines to try to

ask for some of the *Signs of the Times*, especially the late ones of Elder Lambert's sermons. We missed the August volume of his last sermon that was published before he was taken from us. If August is the only one we can get, we would love to receive that one. We want to send you money to take care of the cost.

My husband and I just subscribed for the *Signs of the Times*, the first time this year. But for years my husband, James W. Burgin has been reading them. His family passed them on to him to read. But they have other loved ones to pass them on to, also. He enjoys reading and studying them so much, and I love to hear him explain the sermons to me. We will hope to subscribe for them as long as we may live.

I have always gone to church, and I believe or hope to believe, that I have been born again. I was baptized into a Southern Baptist Church when I was very young. I just didn't understand the truth of the Bible, or why I was a Southern Baptist, and I am so glad I didn't, because in 1941 the good Lord gave me a wonderful husband from a wonderful family. The G. C. Burgin family are Primitive Baptists, and Elder Lambert was the Pastor of the little church out from Big Sandy and Hawkins, Texas.

Elder Lambert published the most wonderful book in 1955, "Tried in the Furnace". A copy was presented to my husband, and it really touched his heart. The way he believed and the trials he had gone through were so much like Elder Lambert's. He has read, studied, and almost memorized the sermons. Every Sunday he either reads the book or the Bible, and explains it all to me. He has been such a wonderful teacher, teaching me the truth of the Bible. By the grace of the Lord we both learn together.

In 1970 Elder Lambert baptized both of us into the Parion Primitive Baptist

Church, where he was the pastor. We feel we have certainly lost a jewel when he passed away.

We are blessed to have Elder Joe Hamrick to take his place. We believe if not deceived, he will be almost another Elder Lambert. He has such a wonderful family. His wife to me is another beautiful jewel.

My husband and I pray the Lord will bless all of you who have a part in the *Signs of the Times*. I hope and pray, if it is the good Lord's will, by His grace and tender mercy that He will enable me to continue to be edified by His leading me in the way of all truths. May God bless all of you and have mercy is our prayers.

From a sister in hope,
Mrs. Marcy Burgin

FROM CANADA

N. Delta, B.C., Canada

Dear Elder Williams,

As you will know from my uncle's last letter, he has been recuperating from his illness and operation in our Regina home.

We have now moved to British Columbia, and are happy that Uncle Ken has accepted our offer to live in our home in British Columbia, also. He has made an easy adjustment and is quite well now - walking fair distances daily and eating well.

Please change his address for his subscription of the *Signs of the Times* to our British Columbia address. His subscription is carried in the name of Kenneth L. Black.

Uncle's older brother, James W. Black, was my Father. My Mother, Annie Louise McColl Black, was great-granddaughter of Elder Gilbert Beebe. Her Mother, Ella V. Beebe McColl was raised in her grandfather, Elder Gilbert Beebe's home after her Mother died when she was very young. Grandma Ella's Father, Elder William Beebe

remarried and his youngest daughter, my very dear Great Aunt Florence Beebe Bellows (widow of Elder Arnold Bellows), now ninety-five years old, lives in a suite in Elder and Mrs. W. J. Berry's home in Elon College, North Carolina. It was my great joy to visit them last February.

Uncle Ken enjoys reading his *Signs of the Times*.

Thank you for changing his subscription address.

Sincerely,
Mrs. E. Lloyd Blackman

LEGAL AND EVANGELICAL REPENTANCE

Dear Messrs. Editors,—I beg to hand you a letter of Mr. Huntington's, as introductory to some others which I hope to send.

Yours in everlasting bonds, in sure and certain hope of eternal life,

A.N.

Dear Sister in Christ,—Yours came safe to hand, and I have considered it. I will by no means say that the Lord God of Israel had no hand in the work described in your narrative; but this I must confess, that evangelical repentance, which, to my view, is essential to salvation, is not in the account. The new wine was put into an old bottle, and where this is the case, pride will burst the bottle, and the wine will run out, and the old bottle must perish. I mean that your joys were not received into a humble, broken, and contrite heart. God hath promised to give us a new heart, as well as a new spirit, and when the new wine is put into a new bottle both are preserved. However, the stony heart shall be taken away, and it shall be destroyed, as well as the other parts of the body of sin; for our old man was crucified with Christ, and, under the operation of the Spirit's renewing power, the body of sin shall be put off.

Repentance is two-fold, legal and evangelical. The former is extorted by fears, terrors, and torment, and is

always attended with hard thoughts of God and self-pity. This is all the repentance that can be produced in us under the law, where we have nothing before our eyes but our own sins and a sin-avenging God. Evangelical repentance is drawn forth and flows out under the sweet operations of pardoning love, and is attended with a believing view of him whom we have pierced, and with mourning for him; and this is accompanied with a justifying of God, and sympathizing with and condoling a suffering Saviour, and with self-aborrence; and so it is written: "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and then ye shall remember your own evil ways, which were not good, and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, when I am pacified toward you." God appearing pacified, and we filled with self-loathing, is the finishing work. When God brings a soul in covenant with him, he accepts us in the Beloved; the atonement applied purges us from our filthiness, and God shines, pacified, reconciled, and well-pleased, in the face of Jesus Christ. All repentance but this needs to be repented of, but this never does; for Christ is exalted to give this repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins; and this repentance is unto life, and is attended with purifying faith. The very text that was sent to you informed you that the humbling rod and the bond of the covenant were wanting in your experience. The rod of God is smiting us with terrors, horrors, flashes of divine anger, reproofs, rebukes, the lashes of conscience, bitter reflections, and smiting us with the application of the threatenings and sentence of a broken law, and with the sore buffetings of Satan, and the killing stings and remorse of guilt.

To come into the bond of the covenant is to have the law of God shed abroad in

our heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us. The work on you seems to be very much like that of Hezekiah, much joy and confidence. And no wonder, for at that time he knew nothing of the plague of his own heart; but when God showed him this, his joy, confidence, and hopes all sunk together: "I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living; I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world; he will cut me off with pining sickness; from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me." (Isa. 38:11, 12) And indeed, nothing will hide pride from our eyes but an abiding sense of our own depravity, and of the superabounding and undeserved mercy of God in Christ Jesus to us. May this religion ever rest with thee and me. So prays thy friend and servant in Christ Jesus.

William Huntington

The Gospel Standard
March, 1843

REQUESTS ARTICLE

Route 5, Box 73
Reidsville, North Carolina

Dear Brother Williams,

When you have room and time, please print this for me.

My Daddy's brother's experience was put in the "Landmark" by old Elder Burch. He was pastor at Pleasant Grove Church at the time of Uncle Walter Cobb's death. He went to see my uncle and talked to him before he passed away and he had the prettiest experience I most ever read. We had it and it got lost. My uncle died December 16, 1896, and I think Brother Burch put it in the "Landmark" shortly after he died. I sure would like to get a copy of it if anyone has one they would share with me, I certainly will appreciate it.

Keep up the good work you are doing. I love the *Signs* better every month.

Yours truly,
Sister Rena Smith

Tuesday 25th

Dear Sister Catherine:

I have had an envelope addressed to you for a week or two. Just kept allowing other things to come in the way. I went to Laurel Creek Sunday. It was good to be there. No visiting Elder. I enjoyed Bro. Roy's sermon. I hope to go to Mountain View this Sunday. I look forward to going church from one Sunday to the next. Going in hope I may be blessed to get a crumb. If in Peter's day prophecy came not by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, is it not true today? God does not change. I say, "It is true".

Romans 5:1 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." I hope you may read the whole chapter. When I can read it is precious, O so precious. I mean by the expression when I can read when it pleases the Lord to give me a little understanding. O how I prize just a little understanding!

John, 16:15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you.

Do we need be afraid of going too far on two points of truth-revealed truth? One of these points is the helpless, depraved condition of the condemned sinner, in themselves considered, under the law and under the curse. The other point is the superlative power, grace, truth and attribute and perfection of the eternal power and Godhead of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He took on a body of flesh like unto his people, sin excepted.

It is too much for one so sinful and undone as I feel to be to claim any part of it, however I feel, by the grace of God to say with one of old, Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief?

I am far from being in the frame of mind I was in when I wrote you, last. How can I sing the songs of Zion in a

strange land?

Sister Catherine, I enjoyed having you spend the day with me, recently, so much. Please hurry back, and do it again.

I hope you can read this, I have sat on couch with work on my lap. I can never write well that way. Would like to close with this thought - Romans 6:8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

I would like to witness with John Grace be with you, mercy and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Love,
Gay

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER

Wheelersburg, Ohio

Dear Editors,

I see that my subscription to the *Signs of the Times* is due at this time. I started taking the *Signs of the Times* in 1939 and then the depression came along and it stopped coming to me for I did not have a job and had a wife sick and children to feed. As soon as I got able I sent in my subscription to the *Signs*. I am now enclosing a check.

I will be 82 years old on September 27th, and I only went to school for a short time. When I was 15 years old I worked in the coal mines at Holden, West Virginia. I am a old time Baptist of that number when 3,000 joined the Church in one day. That will be the Old Primitive Baptist. I believe in the old Primitive Baptist. I never have been a hypocrite. I never joined any church on this earth. I have always loved the *Signs of the Times*. I find a lot of absolute predestination and it is all in God's wisdom before the morning stars sang together and all sons of God

shouted together.

If I could only spell the words I would write to this God-fearing people, my kinfolks. There is about one Baptist out of 500 people. I have been studying Old Baptists for many years. My Grandfather was a Baptist preacher. My Father was a Baptist preacher, so I am in the Baptist family, but I haven't never made a fool out of myself. But I still stick to the Old Primitive Baptists doctrine for I don't know any better.

May God bless all of my people. They are a people hated by all the religious sects, but that doesn't bother me.

May God bless the *Signs of the Times*. Please overlook my mistakes. Farewell all my friends. I am your friend.

William Sparks

EXPERIENCE

Tarboro, N.C. 27889

Dear Brother Griffin,

You asked me some time ago at the Staunton River Association to write my experience for publication in the *Signs of the Times*, but I seem unable to find the right words to put on paper. I have loved the Old Baptists all of my life from the earliest of my years until the present time. I have faithfully attended Old Baptist Church, and I have loved these with a special love for as long as I can remember.

I cannot truthfully say I have always believed the doctrine of the Primitive Baptists, for as a child I did not understand it. When I did start to believing the doctrine of the Bible I cannot pinpoint that either. My parents would carry my brothers and sisters and me to church, and sometimes it seemed as though the preacher would stand all day. We children would begin to twist in our seats and I would say to myself, "I am not going to church on the next Sunday". But as always, the next Sunday would come and I was back on those hard benches. I could not

understand what continued to draw me back to those meetings, but now I hope I do know.

Several years before I was brought to the church I would see other people join the church and wished I could be blessed to join, too. Then I would realize what a foolish thought I was thinking. No one would ever want to see a sinner like me in the church. I could look at the older brethren and sisters in the church and see how good and kind they were, and then think of myself. If I could have felt half as good as they, I would have asked for a home. I did not think that I could ever be as good as I thought one should be to join the church. For a number of years I sat far back on the back row and hoped that one day I would be worthy of uniting with the church. In my laboring mind I came to the conclusion that at seventeen I was far too young to join the church, and finally decided that I probably never would join the church.

Then this particular Sunday morning came and I went to church as usual. I did not have any plans of asking for a home with them that morning, but something inside of me would not let me sit still. I could not understand what was wrong with me, what was happening to me. Many times in the past I had wanted to join but could not, and now I had said that I was not going to join, and I found myself making my way to the front of the church. Then, as now, words would not come to me to express my feelings. I could only tell the brethren of my love for them and wanting to be a part of the Old Baptist Church. I was received into the church, and I was baptized that afternoon.

It has been nearly ten years since that cold and windy March afternoon. Many, many things have happened, many changes have taken place, and many dear ones have passed on. I only hope the good Lord will continue to bless me to believe in and to stand up for the truth as He has set it forth in Holy Writ. The church is my life and its people my

family. I hope we will be blessed to live in peace one with another without so much friction and breaking of fellowship.

I had not planned to be so lengthy, but I had to write what came to my mind. I have only scratched the surface of what I feel in my mind in love and fellowship for the people of God. Should you find that this is not suitable for publication, I will understand.

May the Lord continue to bless us all.

A little sister,
Naomi M. Coker

September 30, 1980

Dear Editors of the Signs:

I feel that many were made sad upon reading of the death of Elder Lambert. Many times I have enjoyed reading his writings. They always seemed to be so full of love. I am sure that in his experience that love was the fulfilling of the law, and mercy was his theme. I, along with probably many others, put off writing to voice our appreciation until it is too late. With this thought I'd like to say to all the writers of the *Signs* that I appreciate them all. It is impossible to name you all, but I believe the Editors deserve a special mention for their labor of love. Elder Wood and Elder Spangler have long been faithful and we look forward to their writings and wish they felt to write more often.

Elder Griffin has long been one of my favorite writers. I always look first thing to see if he has an article in the *Signs*. Elder Poole's writings have also won a place in my heart. I could mention several that I thought were especially blessed.

We feel to give thanks and honor to God for every good and precious gift. Your writings are all precious and such a comfort to poor little sinful worms of the dust as I feel to be. May God bless each and every writer to the *Signs*.

I'd like to close with some thoughts from James, "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable,

gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

Lord help us to be gentle and full of mercy, for he shall have judgment without mercy that has shown no mercy.

Beloved, let us love one another and pray for Zion everywhere. The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few. How our hearts yearn for our children, our friends. We are troubled, burdened, as we try to look upward and wait.

Wait on the Lord. He alone is able to save. We wait and weep.

(Even though this letter was not signed, we felt it expressed love and some precious thoughts we wanted to share with the readers. Editors)

Fremont, N.C.

Dear Brother Williams,

I am enclosing my check for the renewal of my subscription to the *Signs of the Times*.

I still enjoy the publication and look forward to each issue.

I will soon be 84 years old and don't get to go to the distant places that I used to visit. I do have good sight, though, for which I am thankful. I have had cataract surgery, but I see well. I don't drive much any more, so I enjoy passing some of the time by reading.

I have a son who is a member who takes me to church with him on many occasions.

I hope you will continue to be blessed in your publication of the *Signs*. I have been reading it for 40 years.

Your brother in hope,
Eli T. Smith, Sr.

SELECTED FROM HUNTINGTON

A minister of the letter stands in his chains, and in the bondage of his corruption; and he savours of sin and wrath, and nothing else; for the shew of his countenance proclaims it, and

testifies against him.

The presumptuous sinner, that runs into the ministry unsent of God, stands in pride, arrogance, and false confidence, and hardens and emboldens the wicked.

The heretic, who holds damnable heresies, is a minister of Satan, and stands in the father of lies, actuated and influenced by him.

The arminian stands in the flesh, trusts in his own heart, leans to his own understanding, and makes flesh his arm. He is not emptied from vessel to vessel; he is settled on his lees; his scent is not changed; he savours not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

But the minister of Christ stands fast in the Lord; he stands in the Lord's strength, in his grace and favour, in his righteousness, in his truth, in the peace that he has made, and in the liberty that he has proclaimed. He stands as his ambassador and his mouth to the people, shining in his light and burning with his love, seeking his honour and glory, and the welfare of all his seed. For such "to live is Christ, and to die is gain".

EDITORIAL

TRANSCRIBED FROM A SERMON
PREACHED BY
ELDER D. V. SPANGLER

Snow Hill Church, October 23, 1975

May we turn to page 156. I would like for us to think about the sentiment of this hymn as we sing it. If you sing it without taking note of what it says, it is worthless:

Come, thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy grace!
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above:
Praise the mount! O, fix me on it!
Mount of God's unchanging love.

Here I raise my Ebenezer;
 Hither by thy help I'm come;
 And I hope, by thy good pleasure,
 Safely to arrive at home.
 Jesus sought me, when a stranger,
 Wandering from the fold of God;
 He, to save my soul from danger,
 Interposed his precious blood!

O to grace how great a debtor
 Daily I'm constrained to be:
 Let thy grace, Lord, like a fetter,
 Bind my wandering heart to thee.
 Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it!
 Prone to leave the God I love!
 Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it;
 Seal it for thy courts above!

I am thankful to be with you. We had two things happen since arriving that has, you might say, made my trip worthwhile; if there was nothing else. Some time ago I received an invitation to spend our time at this meeting in the home of one of the young members, Linda Adkins. Now I have a reputation in this country of writing short letters, when I write. So I wrote, she said, in maybe two lines, "The Lord willing, I'm coming". As I said to her yesterday morning, "I am going to write you a long letter now, and the letter will say this, that if I hadn't received your letter, I don't think I would have come." So you all might take that as you want to. The other thing is I visited an old friend in the nursing home yesterday morning, Mr. Clarence Robinson, who attended my services many years ago. He is blind now and he didn't recognize my voice. When I told him who I was, the reaction was worth my whole trip. Oh, the reaction of joy he showed for a poor sinner like I am. It surely meant something to me.

In the 17th chapter of the book of John, I shall begin reading with the first verse.

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is

life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

These are the words of Jesus. And the occasion was the approach to the cross and the laying down of His life for His people. I think the message begins with His summing up in the 14th Chapter of John. You know, Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us about the birth of Christ, the virgin birth, the geneology and the events surrounding His natural birth. But the Apostle John soars away in his bringing Him to us. He loses sight, you might say, of His humble birth, His geneology, as he said, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." All the ministers here and elsewhere could never expound the expression, "The same was in the beginning with God." For the unity of the Godhead is there. The covenant relationship is there, in the description, "The same was in the beginning with God." And much of this chapter is bringing to us the relationship and the unity of God the Father and God the Son in the realm of salvation. Embraced in that unity is the people of God. Jesus in God and God in Jesus, and He in them, and them in Him, etc.

In the 14th Chapter of John, Jesus begins to tell His disciples that He is going away. They are puzzled often concerning His going away. In the 14th Chapter He tells them, "If ye believe in God, believe also in me. Let not your hearts be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you". As the time would open and develop and be brought to pass they would see and know more about it. "I go and prepare a place for you, and I will

come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also." He tells them they know the way. Yet there is an inquiry in the mind of Phillip, and he said to Jesus, "Show us the Father". Show us the Father. You have talked about Him. Jesus said, "Have I been so long with you and yet thou hast not known me, Phillip?" "Has all the work that I have unfolded as the eternal will of God in my life been unnoticed and unknown?" "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

The word of God says, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." How many? Everyone! Everyone under consideration. So the 14th Chapter is laying the foundation of His coming again. We are still holding that forth to the people. If it has not become the key to hold, it never will be. I am looking for the coming of our Lord. If I wasn't, I wouldn't be here this morning. I anticipate the event because He said, "I'm coming again." You can say it in the gospel, or however you please, but there is a second coming of the Lord.

Then Jesus brings the matter a little closer as He comes to the 15th Chapter of John regarding the unity of the Father and the Son. He said, "I am the true vine. My Father is the Husbandman." And He didn't forget to say in that chapter, "Ye are the branches". That is bringing into view in a lovely way, the unity of the Father and of the Son and with His people. "Branches". And in connection with that expression He said, "As I live, ye shall live." Just as certainly as I am alive, there is your life. "Ye shall live". There are about five occasions where the expression is used in these three chapters, "These words spake Jesus". It seems that there was a special significance in what He was saying at certain times. "These words spake Jesus" unto them.

I especially delight in the 15th Chapter in the words of Jesus when He said, "These words have I spoken unto

you that my joy might remain in you; that your joy might be full." We will never know what salvation really is until we know the joy of our Saviour in saving us. Our cup will never be full. It will be half empty, until there is in our heart the knowledge that it was just as great a joy for Christ to save us as it is for us to be saved. Paul said, "For the joy set before him". It was always set before Him, and every movement of His life, He endured the cross despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God. God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name. Not only while Christ walked upon the earth, but in every phase of the salvation of His people did He have the preeminence in all things. But His place in heaven now, this morning, is as our Intercessor. He appears in the presence of God for us.

I remember the time I read that scripture in the 15th Chapter. It was at night and I was setting in my room. Whatever He had been telling in the 14th Chapter, and coming on down to the 15th, "Ye are the branches," etc., it seems now, He said, "These words He spake". He says, "I spake these words unto you that my joy might remain in you; that your joy might be full." I don't think that we would detract anywhere from God's grace and His mercy and His everlasting love for His people to say that even the Father in bringing many sons to glory thought the work of His son will take pleasure in it, also. And in connection with that; there is something about the doctrine of grace and the wonders of God's grace that presents these two thoughts. When this world has been brought to a conclusion, and is over, there will be a people in heaven that God won't be ashamed of. And the only reason there will be a people that He won't be ashamed of is because He will prepare them for it. And we also, my hearers, won't be ashamed. Christ was not ashamed to call His people, "Brethren". God was not

ashamed to be called our God, He says that in the book of Hebrews. God was not ashamed to be called the God of the people pictured in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. It is the only way God could have a people in heaven that He wouldn't be ashamed of. He prepares them for it. And one of the great blessings of Grace is that God prepares us for what He has prepared for us. Have you learned that in your life? That same hand must prepare you for what God has prepared for you? Whether it is either joy or sorrow, it is the same thing. One is no different than the other. God must prepare us for joy as well as sorrow.

And now, Jesus in the 14th and 15th chapters has been preparing them for His going away. He has stressed to them that "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name it shall be given to you". That used to be a great puzzle to me. But when I found that the various names of Christ and the titles of Christ was found over 100 times in the Bible, I said, "His name must embrace every need of His people." Whether He is the Advocate, the Intercessor, or whoever He is, it must embrace it all. His Name! These Great Right Reverends, so and so's might think they have a right long handle when they have two or three words attached to their names. But think of the Lord Jesus Christ having over 100 names and titles in the word of God, and each one suited to each characteristic of Him. Oh, my friend, isn't it a wonderful thing? I would travel thousands of miles to see Him one moment. He is the Kings of Kings. He is the Lord of Lords. Everywhere!

I have been in the city of Washington a few times, and they say every avenue leads to the Capitol. You go down Pennsylvania Avenue or Massachusetts Avenue, or any other, and they lead to the Capitol. But think here, every name of salvation, every phase of salvation of the people of God embodied in the Name of Christ that leads to Him!

You can have a dozen avenues in the city of Washington, and they would be crowded thoroughfares, wouldn't they? But there can be over a hundred names and title of Christ pointing to Him and the virtue of Him and there is never any congestion in the way. There is always a way to see Him, and there is always a desire in the heart of those at the throne of God to say, "I would see Jesus."

Paul admonished Timothy to preach the word: to reprove, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine. I said not long ago that if the doctrine of exhortation wasn't in the New Testament I had been preaching a lie over 50 years. It is there and it is for the minister as God directs him. If it is preached in blind zeal it is just as terrible as he is, but if it is through the constraining grace of God, then it is, as recorded in the New Testament, "Exhort the church of God with all longsuffering, and doctrine." "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but they will heap to themselves teachers having itching ears". You know, I used to wonder what that was, "Teachers having itching ears". I said, "I have heard of the nose itching, but not the ears itching". Probably I shouldn't say this, but I say a lots of things I wish I hadn't said, and lots of things I don't say that I wish I had said. But not long ago I heard a minister speak, and when he got through he took out of the pulpit like he was in a race with somebody. And he looked like he was itching to hear what somebody was going to say about the sermon he had preached. He must have had itching ears, do you suppose? I don't know. I will leave that for you to decide.

But these words, now we are coming to the hour of Christ. We are coming to Him and the hour appointed in eternity that our Saviour must die for us. And now His prayer. His people come first. The awful hour is approaching that He must pay the debt that all mankind couldn't pay. All the blood of all Adam's

race from Adam's day to today couldn't pay it. The blood of the Son of God only, could. And the hour, He recognizes very well. He says, "Father". "These words spake Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy son that thy son may also glorify thee." That is the unity of the Godhead. There is the husbandman and the true vine. "As thou has given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." That's what we preach! Christ had power over all flesh for one end. To give eternal life to as many as thou has given Him. "And this is life eternal; that they might know him". That is what it is. God has a sure and certain and definite way of bringing that life to them. The only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. "And now, O Father". There was a time that our Saviour couldn't call God His Father. There was a time when in His humiliation His judgment was taken away. There was a time that the literal words that were in the 22nd Psalm must be brought out of the lips of Christ. "My God; My God, why hast thou forsaken me." Now what was He asking God for? He calls Him Father, and I like the expression. "And now, Oh Father." We only hint at what is involved. We can't tell it. What is He asking for now? What is the special request of Christ? "Glorify thou me with thine own self". That is what He wanted. That is what He was asking for. And the kind of glory that He asked God to give Him was the kind that He had with Him before the world was. Could He have asked anything greater? That in the hour of departure, the wonders of the covenant might be brought truly into view; that He who He entered into covenant with before this world was, there would be a continuation and a fulfilling of it in bringing Him from the dead. Paul said in the last chapter of the book of Hebrews, "The God of peace"; "The God of Peace who brought again from the dead our Lord

Jesus Christ, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." The blood of the everlasting covenant! Make you perfect, etc., and in every good work it was good. And now He asked God to glorify Him with His presence. That the fulness of the love of God in the moment when the covenant was entered into, and God's love for His Son and His Son for Him, and the love for His people and the love of the people of God for them. "With thine own self". That is the glory Christ is asking for. There is no question, is it? That is the glory He has asked God for. Glorify Him with Himself. "With the same glory I had with you before the world was."

Some try to tell us now and try to bring us a saviour like one peddling something on the street. That isn't the God I worship. Our Lord Jesus Christ stresses in these chapters in John that though He was going away, He wasn't going to leave them comfortless. "I will send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit in my name, and he shall take the things of mine and show them unto you." That work is still going on. You talk about experiences of grace. Every time the Holy Spirit brings to the heart of a sinner the assurances of Christ's work and their need of it, it is an experience of grace. It is of grace, however it may come, and that which doesn't come by grace isn't of the Holy Spirit. It is of the flesh, whatever it might be. The Holy Spirit doesn't wander around at random looking for something to bring to the people of God. He doesn't bring just any thing. He brings the things of Christ. He applies every promise that a sinner has ever received in his heart of heaven and immortal glory. The Holy Spirit brings it. And there is no substitute for it. You can have a lots of substitutes, but not the Holy Spirit because He is equal with Jesus Christ, Himself. "And now, Oh Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the same glory I had with you before the world." And an answer was given Jesus on one occasion from the

Father, "I have already glorified thee".

My beloved children, this morning, our Saviour is at the right hand of the Throne of God. He is as much alive today as He was when He was here, and He now in heaven appears in the presence of God for us. He is our Mediator; the only one between God and man that has the power of mediation. Every requirement of God for His people, Christ has met in His death and His righteous life.

And as the hour approaches that He must depart, He said, "Oh Father". Have you ever felt you could call God your Father? Have you ever felt the sweetness of your Saviour's love that you could never tell anyone of? Oh, my friend, I wake up in the hours of night sometime, and it is like day. Some avenues pointing me to the virtues of Christ. Something I haven't seen will appear. I want to exalt His name. I sometimes think as the poet said:

"I want to praise Him while He gives me breath;
I hope to praise Him after death."

And in the 24th verse of the 17th chapter our Saviour prayed. Yes, my friend, He prayed, that those He died for would be with Him. And He didn't only pray for that, but that "They shall see my glory". I expect to see the glory of Christ. I expect to share in the glory of my Master. Will that be fulfilled? As sure as you are setting there, this morning. And when the hour arrives, Jesus said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." But He tells us here, "I have finished the work". Before He died He said, "I finished the work". "All things that are written in the prophets and in Moses and the Law and the Psalms concerning me". As He approached the cross He said, "They have been fulfilled". Every one of them. There hasn't been a one left out. "And now, Oh Father, glorify thou me with thy own self, with the same glory I had with you before the world." Then in the next chapter when He leaves His disciples, He goes out to meet our great

foe and His. As He approaches those that Judas was bringing He said, "Who are you looking for?" And then He said, "I am the one". "I am the very one you are looking for". His great love led Him to meet them. His great love for you, my friends, led Him to meet His enemy. The eternal relationship and the eternal love of God in Him led Him, and the enemy fell on the ground. I'm glad they didn't have to send after Him. I'm glad they didn't have to tie Him. I know that the lamb was tied for a time in the eternal covenant as a type of Jesus on the Jewish altar. He was bound with cords on it, bound to the altar, but here I see the Lamb loose, now. And He goes to meet them, and He opens not His mouth. "Dumb before His shearers". I said yesterday afternoon I had some thoughts the other day about Christ being dumb. I just touched it. I can't tell you about it. Dumb. Mute. Beyond speech! Carrying our sins to that cross. Oh, my friends, lift up your heads this morning. Many of us may never meet again here on the shores of time. Lift up your heads. Lift up your heads! Our redemption is drawing nigh! I thank you!

Elder D. V. Spangler

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tremble. Not all that hear the word do it, therefore James also said, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." - James 1:22-25.

It is true that faith does come by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, but there is as decided a difference between a living faith and a dead faith as there is between a living child and a doll. The doll can be dressed up with dress, shoes and hat, as the living child, but it is still a doll, it is dead. In the child is life, and life must always be there before any evidence of life can be manifested. The heart beats, breathing and movement of limbs, the crying, hearing and seeing are evidence of life which, as others see them, cause them to conclude that this is a living child.

True faith is a living principle in the soul, that works by love, causing the possessor to do the word of God, as well as to hear it, while false faith stalks about in an empty profession. Paul says, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." - Titus 1:16.

To some, perhaps, as they read these things, it will seem hard to reconcile them with the utterance of Paul in Romans 3:28, where he tells "That a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," using the testimony concerning Abraham as a proof, but does not James also use the same testimony in the chapter before us to prove his assertion that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only? Paul refers to works of the law; James is referring to very different works, as we shall try to

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

October 1939

JAMES 2:26

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

The chapter from which the above verse is taken is very plain, and simple, so that a child might understand it. This is one of many Scriptures that deal with practical religion, teaching that there is something else beside a belief in, or assent to, the word. While in this chapter James says that one is doing well if he believes there is one God, yet he tells us that devils also believe and

prove.

We fully believe that Paul and James were agreed, for the Holy Spirit inspired their testimony, and neither of them would have been faithful had he tried to mix works and grace, or law and gospel. One who has never been delivered from the law by the body of Christ does works which he, in his own mind, feels will help him to get to heaven and God's presence with a "WELL DONE." Working for a blessing.

One under the gospel, led by the Holy Spirit, and blessed with a living faith, which is the fruit of the Spirit, will do those things that are well-pleasing unto God, and such an one is blest in his deed. We would have our readers note that he is blest, not for his deed, but in his deed. How strange that we should find such unruly characters in the church even in the apostles' days, who were so high-minded and indifferent as to their walk and conversation. They had "crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation."—Jude 4. It was so that God's servants should contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

There have always been those who seem to have a strong faith, a faith that could move mountains, and have not charity, and Paul says of such, they are nothing. They can speak with tongues of men and of angels, yet they know not how to bridle their tongues; they deceive their own hearts, and their religion is vain. Paul and James were both agreed in the cardinal truth of justification by faith. In Hebrews Paul tells us of the works of those who walked by faith, while James in the afore mentioned chapter is insisting upon the evidence of true faith in the everyday life of the brethren. He would not have them rest in a head knowledge, which they might call faith, and reckon that such is sufficient for salvation, when it does not affect the heart, nor influence the walk and conversation. Thus he first

mentions "respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool." - James 2:1-3. "If ye fulfill the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."-James 2:8, 9. Again, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can such faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew my thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only thing that can make us acceptable unto God, but such a faith proves itself true and genuine, for it works by love and is accompanied by every good work.

As faith in the Lord Jesus Christ makes us acceptable unto God, so the works of faith make us acceptable unto the brethren. A person professing that faith, yet who is at home in the world, having little or no care for better things, while he is enslaved by the love of money, and under the dominion of sin, his religion is vain. No doubt it was such people that James had seen. He noticed that in their excitement to bestow attention upon the man with the gold ring and goodly apparel, that they would slight God's humble poor. As an example of a true and living faith, James takes our father Abraham, who

is called the father of the faithful. He says, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." "Faith wrought with his works." Though he knew that in Isaac his seed should be called, and was told by God that that seed would be innumerable, yet he believed God, and went to offer up Isaac, doing the work, going under the power of faith, or, as James says, faith wrought in what he did. Such a work was to be fulfilled of the Scripture. Every word of God shall come to pass, the things that God has said his people will do, faith will work in them, enabling them to work out those things well-pleasing unto God. This is what Paul meant when he said to the Philippian Church, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."-Phil. 2:12, 13.

Many who believe that there is one God, creator and disposer of all things, who has planned and purposed all things whatsoever come to pass, reason with a carnal mind, and say, that seeing that God has declared the end from the beginning, etc., and that his people are to be blessed, then why pray for a blessing which is purposed for us? With the same reasoning, Why go to meeting? Why read the Scriptures? Why try to influence our young to attend where the truth is preached, for if they are to be saved they will be saved? Why ask God for anything when he knows what we need, and in asking we might ask amiss? Why profess his name, or strive to live godly, for if we are to be saved we will be saved anyhow? We call all such reasoning carnal reasoning, and it is from our carnality it springs, and it is God-dishonoring, resulting in this day

from ignorance of the Scripture and of the power of God. There is a place for prayer in God's purpose, a very special place, it is called a throne of grace, and God's children rejoice that there is a throne of grace, and they know that praise is comely to the upright, and it is said that "God inhabiteth the praises of Israel." - Psalms 22:3. God has not only purposed the end, but every link in the chain of events, and his worship is in his appointments.

The woman of Canaan was in trouble, her daughter was vexed with a devil. The Lord had sent this trouble, other women, perhaps, had the same trouble, but God's Spirit was in her, and a God-given faith was there also, and she pushed aside every obstacle. So mightily did faith work in her that she faced a rebuff from Jesus, and opposition from his disciples, and she worshipped him (what a work of faith), saying, Lord, help me. (Matt. 15:22-28).

Public worship is also of God's appointment, and it is longed for by those who are deeply tried, to them it is a relief to leave the world and its noise; they often have a gladness of heart, as when David said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."-Psalms 122:1. Where true faith is there will be an exercise or work that will redound to the good of the soul and the glory of God. In the preacher, it will prompt him to go, leaving his home, and, if necessary, suffer privation for the cause of truth, he will endure the cross and despise the shame. He will lose sight of the gold ring and goodly apparel as in his heart he feels to be at the footstool of God's humble poor, and he is blest in his deed. Although he may feel that he cannot pray, yet many will desire an interest in his prayers, and it is good when his faith is exercised in the word of God to the comfort and edification of the saints.

It is in faith and by faith that brethren will esteem others better than themselves, it will enable those who

have it to choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. What sweet fellowship there is enjoyed in the church of God when brethren are doers of the word as well as hearers. It was a work of faith when the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their stripes, when he submitted to the believer's baptism and received them into his house and set meat before them. (Acts 16:33, 34.) What a work of faith was Abraham's and Isaac's as they journeyed into the mount. Isaac said, My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And faith working in him mightily, Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb. What a blessed road, and what solemn thoughts were theirs as they journeyed. James not only gives us Abraham as an example, but he seems to go from the greatest to the least, bringing in the harlot Rahab, the last one that man would expect to look to for an example of good works. A fallen creature, like ourselves, who had done nothing good, and of herself could do nothing good, yet it is said "she believed in God." The proof of that was her works. She received the spies into her house, and sent them out another way, and she perished not with them that believed not, when she received the spies with peace. Her faith did not fail, for after she had sent the spies out another way, she confessed her belief in the God of heaven and earth, and she displayed the scarlet thread in her window. Steadfast in the faith, she waited until she was taken by the spies, with all that she had, into Israel's camp in peace.

We cannot possibly see how our subject can be twisted to strengthen a system of duty religion in which the soul would build up a store of works which would force God to change his mind. "He is in one mind, and who can change him?" There is no way of acceptance with God but in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The creature by nature has no righteousness acceptable unto God, all he may have is a righteousness of the flesh, which Paul had made much of, but of which he spoke when he said, "Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."-Phil. 3:8, 9.

To those who have another and different way to that which Paul had, in which they would set up the old creatures to work for heaven, we would say, should God, who is rich in mercy, lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, "hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place."-Isaiah 28:17. Then they would confess themselves vile, without ability to do any good things. Jesus, the Savior of sinners, would then be the one thing needful and they would want to feel the word with power. It was the word with power that enabled Abram to leave his father's house and go to a land that God would show unto him. This word with power is "a springing well," within the person to whom it comes, enabling them to walk and do those things that are acceptable unto God.

Faith embraces the beginning and the end, and every step of the way, it believes God and embraces the faith once delivered unto the saints. It enables the possessor to "hold fast the form of sound words," and accounts that "the words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."-Psalms 12:6. A respect unto the word will often bring about a self-examination, while a neglect of the word in its precepts and exhortations will result in a coldness, and the soul will soon find itself lusting

after, and minding the things of the flesh. The carnal mind ever results in death, a death to all joy and peace in believing, but it is a work of faith, a faith of the operation of God, that makes one remember God and be troubled. Those precepts and exhortations are given that we may see our shortcomings and realize that only by faith, which is the fruit of God's Spirit, can we do them. They are given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Some, of course, will say that it is a lack of faith when one is troubled. We do not think so. True faith lives and labors under loads, though damped it never dies. It, like a star, shines brightest in the darkest night. There may be a fearfulness lest we slip, yet such are kept by the power of God. It is through much tribulation, yet faith enables them to wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. While passing through trouble, Job, a possessor of faith, could say, "The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly," as much as to say that there are no bounds in their death, their strength is firm, while the child of God seems often ready to slip. Surely this is for the trial of faith, which is more precious than of gold, though it be tried by fire.

Many of us can look back to the time when we knew the Lord helped us, but this is not sufficient, faith wants a present help, past helps will encourage us to wait upon the Lord, knowing that he who has promised is able to perform. It will cause us not to despise the chastisement of the Lord, nor to faint when we are rebuked of him. We may not be able to say that our prayer is a prayer of faith, and we know that whatsoever is not of faith is sin, but our needs will be such that pray we must, it will seem to be

our life's breath, and whether we are answered or not, we know at such times it is right to pray.

The same applies to all our ways: if it is going to meeting we do not know that there will be a blessing for us, but the word saith, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is," and we know it is right to go, and wrong to absent ourselves. If it is not our pleasure to go, it is our duty, for we should not please ourselves. If we are concerned as to our duty to the Lord and to those who have offended against us, the word of God is plain and will be followed if we walk in the faith, though often such work will be very unpleasant to the flesh. It is not easy to pray for our enemies, to do good to those who spitefully use us, yet it becomes us so to do, even though it is a painful work.

Much could be said bearing on this subject, but we close with the observation that in the foregoing chapter James tells us in the last ten verses no less than three times that faith without works is dead.

Elder George Ruston

OBITUARIES

ALVIE WILLIAMS

Who was that man -- the one in the overalls who sat in the corner so close to the pulpit where the minister stands? The one with tears running down his cheeks and wiping them away with the blue bandana handkerchief? The one who kept nodding his head in emphatic agreement with the gospel and doctrines of Christ that were being preached? The meek and lowly one who sat there mourning?

These questions were asked many times by visitors at Mountain Fork Primitive Baptist Church in Madison County Alabama -- and this writer was proud to answer, "Who was that man - why, that was my brother" (both in nature and in Church fellowship).

Brother Alvie Williams, age 75, departed this life August 24, 1980. He was the fourth child and the first son born to the late Brother G. W. and Sister Price Stone Williams.

His last thirty-one years were spent as a member in the Church of the Lord with the Mountain Fork assembly. He was a true believer in Salvation by Grace and Grace alone.

His immediate survivors include his widow, Annie Roberts Williams, one daughter, Mrs. Maris Chapman; one son, Humes Williams; five grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Also surviving Brother Alvie are three brothers and four sisters.

He loved his family dearly and expressed regret in leaving them, but as his days grew shorter and the pain racked his mortal body, he remarked to me on one of my visits to see him that he was ready and would be glad to see "the morning".

The funeral service was conducted by Elder R. H. Hale at Moore-Cortner funeral home in Winchester, Tennessee and his body was laid to rest beside that of our parents in the Mt. Carmel Cemetery in Huntland, Tennessee where they all wait that great day -- the second coming of the Lord when He will gather the saints together to reign forever with Him throughout eternity -- O my soul!

Written with a tearful prayer for submission and in loving memory of my oldest brother.

Lavonia W. Lee
P.O. Box 209
Huntland, Tennessee 37345

SISTER LILLIAN HOLT

It has pleased God to remove another dear Sister of ours from this world of woe. Sister Holt loved her church and was faithful to attend as long as she was able. When it became a chore for her to get to church, services were held several times in her home. After her confinement to the nursing home she still requested her pastor and assistant pastor have services there at the chapel, which they did. This was just another way she showed her desire to hear the gospel and

to fellowship with the brethren. For a number of years she provided the transportation to church for four of our widowed members. She was well acquainted with trials and afflictions here, but I believe she was made submissive to God's will.

Sister Holt was born March 1, 1908, and departed this life July 9, 1980. She was a daughter of the late Walter and Sallie Bryant Hall. Surviving are three sisters, Frances Terry Link, Mary Riddle, and Ruth Parcell. The funeral was held at Malmaison Primitive Baptist Church where she was a member for 28 years. Conducting the service was her Pastor, Elder O. K. Tench, and Elder Julian Williams. Burial was in Danville Memorial Gardens.

Submitted by one who loved her,
I trust for Christ's sake,
Peggy Wells

BROTHER ARTHUR MITCHELL

We are again saddened by the death of another dear member, Brother Arthur Mitchell. God blessed him to be a humble, honest, and sober man, respected by his friends and neighbors. He loved the brethren and his mind seemed to dwell constantly on heavenly things. He and Sister Mitchell were a most devoted couple.

"By their fruits ye shall know them." Brother Mitchell bore the fruits of the Spirit as much as anyone I ever knew.

He was born January 21, 1898, and departed this life August 8, 1980. Surviving are his wife, Sister Frances Mitchell; two daughters, Agnes Carbin of Alexandria and Celia Branch of Charlottesville; two sons, Arthur Lee Mitchell, Jr. of Richmond and Clintner Mitchell of Pleasant Lake, Mich.; one sister, Mrs. J. L. Oakes of Dry Fork.

His funeral was held at Malmaison Primitive Baptist Church where he had been a member for 16 years. Conducting the service was his pastor, Elder O. K. Tench, and Elders Julian Williams and Haywood Wray. Burial was in the Boage family cemetery.

Humbly Submitted,
Peggy Wells

Signs of the Times

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
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IS 3/81
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

STAUNTON RIVER

UNION MEETING

The Staunton River Union meeting will convene with Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church, the 5th Sunday and Saturday before in March 1981.

NOTICE

We expect, the Lord willing, to reprint several articles in the May, 1981, issue of the *Signs of the Times* from the May, 1881, issue.

This will mark the 100th anniversary of Elder Gilbert Beebe's death, and we feel some very interesting history is contained in these articles.

Editors

If Jehovah is infinite in all His ways,
Giving life to man and numbering his days,
Who dares to impeach Him, if, in His wise
plan,
He gave shape and direction to the ways of
man?

If he, in His wisdom, did all things create,
Should He turn loose the helm and leave
things to fate?

Did He not have the right in His sinless
decree

To mark out the way, both for you and for
me?

If He did decree just what we should do,
I cannot arraign Him—say, brother, can
you?

Before whom will you try Him as judge of
your court?

Who will act as your clerk and make your
report?

If all things are in the decree of His will,
 And all things are working the same to
 fulfill,
 Who but a vile sinner too wicked to bow,
 Would call Him in question, or say what
 doest thou?

If He decreed the death of His Son,
 The sinless, the righteous, the most holy
 One,
 And this did not make Him the author of
 sin,
 To make Him the author, where would you
 begin?

Will you begin with Judas, whose act was
 foretold,
 And as was determined, his Master he
 sold?
 Did not the dear Saviour say, woe to that
 man,
 I go as determined in God's holy plan?

If Pharaoh you think would, no doubt,
 Prove that God's purpose was not carried
 out,
 Did not God command him, by Moses, you
 know,
 Saying, "thus sayeth Jehovah, Let my
 people go?"

"Yet, I will harden," yes, harden, "his heart,
 That he shall refuse, and not let them depart,
 Till I bring my just plagues on all of your
 foes,
 And thus get me honor on him and all his
 host?"

Yet sinners most wicked will oft Him
 arraign,
 Against His just counsel they often
 complain,
 And say, if He decreed all things unto the
 end,
 Then He is unjust and the author of sin.
 The heathen may rage and imagine vain
 things,
 The lowest, the highest, yea, even their
 kings,
 And shout till the world hear the sound of
 their din,
 The author, the author, the author, of sin.
 His saints will still praise Him, and shout
 as they go,
 Jehovah, most holy, doth all things
 foreknow;

His counsel did settle just how they should
 be;
 So, shout on, ye heathen, you don't disturb
 me.

We learn from an angel that time shall soon
 end,
 And saints shall be welcomed by Jesus their
 friend;

This all is established by His holy decree,
 For thus it is written, and thus it shall be.

If all things are certain, then how came them
 so?

If things were not certain, how could God
 foreknow?

Were all things to which foreknowledge
 relate

Made certain by the old heathen goddess of
 fate?

We surely all know, at a thought or a glance,
 That things are not left to haphazard or
 chance;

Will one please tell me, that I may once see,
 How things can be certain yet uncertain be?

Now, while you are thinking, I'll come to a
 halt,

If you don't see the point it isn't my fault;
 But, brother, please tell me how this thing
 can be,

All things were made certain without a
 decree?

Elder J. C. Sikes

EXPERIENCE

In the year 1915 I was about 12 years
 old, and I was walking a farm road
 reading Revelations 21:8. Many of the
 things mentioned in this passage of
 scripture I have never put into action,
 but I, for the first time in my life, knew
 what it meant to be guilty of the whole.
 As I walked along the road I was crying
 out, "God have mercy on me". I came to
 the place that I thought I had made my
 last step on earth. I went down on my
 face thinking that I would never get up
 again; that was the place that I would
 die and awake in hell, knowing that God
 was just in doing so. I feel that was the
 place where heaven and earth kissed. I
 felt that my sins were pardoned and

forgiven. I arose to my feet praising God. Everything that I could see seemed to be praising the Lord. I could not believe that I would have any more troubles. Little did I know about the tribulations that were before me.

I went about 14 or more years before I ever had a desire to ask the church for a home. I was so depressed that I thought I was losing my mind. I went this way for about two and a half years. During this time I had a double burden because also I had a weight to go and preach the gospel. I vowed that I would never do it for the people would not want to hear me. Yet I had rather preach than anything. I knew that I could not of myself preach the gospel, or I would be preaching only to myself.

In the year of 1935, the fourth Saturday in May, I went before the church and asked for a home and was received. I was baptized the next day. I did not say anything about my feeling I thought I would have to go to the pulpit, but Sister John Ramsey said, "A minister has joined the church today, and I want to hear him when he first speaks". I was liberated in 1937, and ordained in 1941.

Now I want to come to some of my visions and revelations. Before I ever went to the pulpit I had this double vision in a dream. I was walking in a forest of woods, and I saw a tree about 20 feet high, with blue flashes of lightning coming down to about knee high. I had to walk through it. I had a great fear, thinking that no man could go through this and live without the faith of God. I went through and was not harmed. Then I heard these words coming from the tree, "Surely Jim has seen the hand of God". And in the same night, I saw myself standing in a field, and two men came before me, looked me over, and then they went back from whence they came. Then I heard the same voice say to me, "Thou shalt have two children before that you can see my face". There was one daughter born, and after that

my wife died. I went about thirty years puzzled over the meaning of this dream. It caused me much trouble. In 1972 I was hunting in the woods, and as I was walking by the trees, this dream came to me with the interpretation, and I saw that my two grandchildren were the two children. I believe that was the meaning of that dream. I came down with a gall operation, and was very nervous. I thought that my time was nigh at hand; the two children had been born. I wanted to die and be out of my troubles, but I could not die. I have been from coast to coast more than once since that time and have met a good many of the faithful of God.

Now another vision before that I ever began to speak in public. I was standing in a field looking at a hill covered with oak trees. From my right I heard a sound like a mighty rushing wind and a sweet rumbling sound. As it went through the trees every tree bowed under the pressure of it, but not even a leaf fell. Then I heard these words coming from the trees, "A God-born man can not sin. You know not who they are, but I do". Now when I go into the stand I never try to be the judge of the people, but try to preach the truth and let the chips fall where they will.

This vision was about 1962. I was troubled about what to do. I begged the Lord to tell me what to do. I prayed nearly three days and nights over this matter. The third night at 12:25 A.M. I heard these words so sweet and loud that the earth rang, "Be still and know that I am God". I awoke thanking the Lord. I looked it up in the Bible, and it was found in the book of Psalms 46:10.

I have seen myself ascending upward toward heaven shouting praise to God. I have seen behind the gloomy cloud, and what a beautiful blue sky, with a golden Sun in the midst of it.

After all of these visions it seems that I would not be so depressed as much of the time as I am.

Dear readers, please join in and let us

know what the Lord has done for you.
(Elder) J. R. Hollandsworth

THE MAN-CHILD

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:"—Isa. 9:6A

To appreciate fully this comforting message which Isaiah delivered to Israel, we must contrast that which the inspired prophet had said moments before. He had spoken of Judah's distress and of Divine judgment in the previous chapter. The chastening hand of judgment and wrath lay heavy upon them. The Assyrians would serve as the Divine instrument and invade the region and many would be led into captivity and slavery, and sigh and lament under the oppressor's yoke.

"They made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service wherein they made them serve, was with rigour."—Exodus.

Oh my soul, we all know what it means to be in servitude and bondage and to serve with rigour. But God is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish. The darkness and oppression would not be forever. The Man-Child is anointed to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. The promise of the text is that a great light would appear (Isa. 9:2). And similarly to the prophecy of Zacharias,

"The day-spring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."—Lk. 1:78, 79.

Historically, this prophecy was fulfilled through and by Cyrus the Persian king. He is the natural child under consideration. However, the scripture is to be spiritually discerned (I Cor. 2:14), and spiritually speaking, the prophecy is fulfilled in Christ the Saviour.

As the ancient people of God were

some seventy years in captivity, we (the spiritual Israel) experience and feel the yoke of bondage and oppression and the vexation of mind and soul. Moreover, some of the dear suffering saints (for example, Heman the Ezrahite) feel to live and move among the dead even the slain that lie in the grave whom thou rememberest no more (Psa. 88). Some feel destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world is not worthy). But the galling yoke of captivity is to be experienced in order to know the joy of deliverance and the strength of the Mighty God of promise.

I knew a man who served three long years in a cold dark dungeon. He was cut off from worship (as the lepers of old) and chained in fetters of sin. Even his prayers tormented him, and did bite and gnaw like a burning worm. Like the man in the Iron Cage, (Pilgrim's Progress) God's Word gave no encouragement to believe; yea, God had shut him up in the Iron Cage and no man could let him out. He feared he was shut out of all the promises, and there remained nothing but threatenings, dreadful and fearful threatenings of certain judgment and fiery indignation.

But God, who is rich in mercy raised up the Man-Child to break the yoke of burden, and the rod of the oppressor, as in the day of Midian, and in the language of Wesley;

"Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night,
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light,
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I arose, went forth to follow thee."

Now when the ancient people of God were released from captivity and entered the promised land again, the remnant which had been spared and stayed behind, suddenly saw their number increased and burst into joy and praise.

"Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
For thou hast broken the yoke of his

burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian."—
Isa. 9:3, 4.

Such rejoicing and praise reminds me of the heavenly joy in the Church over one sinner that repents (Lk. 15:7), or the woman who, upon finding her lost coin, rejoiced among friends and neighbors (Lk. 15:9), and the exultant father of the prodigal.

As mentioned previously, the prophecy was naturally and historically fulfilled in Cyrus and Israel's return from the seventy years of captivity. More important however, the Spirit of faith was testifying beforehand the birth of Jesus and the fact of His Kingdom. The prophet Isaiah was enabled to scan the work of God and see Jesus coming into the world and in the affairs of God's elect. He witnessed the Messiah delivering them from Babylon (the world of confusion) and ushering in a government of peace which there shall be no end. The Spirit testifies of a Kingdom established in judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever (Isa. 9:7).

My dear friend, it is a mercy that we have a Sovereign Potentate, the Mighty God who sits upon the throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it and all subsequent events for our good (Rom. 8:28), and for His own glory. He is the Governor among the nations: (Psa. 22:28) and he doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?

"For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor heights, nor depths, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:38, 39

Now in speaking of this deliverance, I must impress upon the reader's mind that this is but the beginning of a series of deliverances which will culminate

when the Kingdom of Grace is delivered unto the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and authority and power, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Until the consumation of all things, when all shall be subdued unto Him, we shall experience a paradoxical life. A life and profession composed of liberty and bondage, darkness and light, vexations and joys. And as Bunyan described it:

"A christian man is n'er long at ease; When one's fright's gone, another doeth him seize."—Bunyun.

Lord willing, a second installment, examining the eternal Son-ship of the Man-Child, will be forth-coming.

(Elder) Jack H. Dawsey

FROM KANSAS

Wichita, Kansas

Dear Editors,

Please find enclosed a check for \$25.00 for two years subscription to the *Signs of the Times*. Use the rest as needed.

There are times when this person feels to be without the presence of the Holy Spirit, and left entirely on his own. It is then he sees his own corruption, his helplessness, and total inability to return or to change his condition. Surely he is "poor in spirit". It is here that his hope sustains his spirit that God is unchangeable, and that the work of Christ in forgiving his sins will appear again to his relief and joy.

Some have departed from the truth at this point. It appears that they believe that after regeneration the person has the power at his discretion to obey or disobey the commandments of God.

I guess all the preaching I will be able to hear from now on will be reading the *Signs of the Times*. The Bible says, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her

iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins". (Isa. 40:1, 2)

This makes her safe in His almighty power, for she is "kept by the power of God unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last day".

I cannot express the food I get from the writings of you dear Editors. If you all have a time of prayer, please pray for me. I am eighty-five and my mind is not so good any more. I am getting as a little child. I mourn the death of Elder Lambert.

I would love to see some writings on the thousand years reign with Christ.

If I have written anything to offend, please write me and correct me, for I do love God, if my heart is not deceiving.

A sinner,
Fred Winfrey

humanity than either Pilate or the religious mob. It reminded me of what I heard over the radio some time ago from a preacher in Collinsville. He said God's people were saved when Jesus died on the cross for the sins of His people, nothing they had done, or could do to save themselves, and if anyone didn't believe it they were going to hell. Here he denied his own words, because he went on to say that a fellow at his church accepted Christ and was saved. But this fellow had some beer at home and he was going to pour it out, but instead he drank it, and now he was going to hell. That fellow accepted a false Christ, and preached his own funeral, for he said anyone who didn't believe Christ died for the sins of His people and had finished His word was going to hell.

Yours in the faith of God's elect.
Mattie Underwood

To the Signs of the Times,
Dear Ones,

I have just received the October issue of the *Signs*, and I enjoyed the writings and its contents very much.

My daughter-in-law gave me a clipping from the newspaper where someone was offering a reward for anyone who can find the verse where the Bible says there is salvation in or through a Baptist Church. They knew these things are being taught.

I don't want his money. I read in Matthew Chapter 3, verses 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and also Chapter 21, verses 24, 25, 26; some deny the truth through ignorance, while some do for worldly gain. I agree with Elder Poole when he said it will cause some to read the Bible more, and not to listen to false prophets who deny the truth. Read Matt. 24:24, Mark 13:5, I John 3:7, and II Timothy 3:13.

I agree with Elder Poole saying in his writings about Christ before Pilate (John 19:10-11), that the average drunkard that sits on a bar stool drinking beer has more regard for

FROM ARKANSAS

Danville, Arkansas

Dear Editors of the *Signs of the Times*,

I haven't received my October *Signs*, so I guess by subscription has run out. I have let other members have all this year's *Signs*. I don't have any of them back to check. I'll send a check for mine and two others.

I enjoy the *Signs* so much. At times I don't get to go to our meetings on Church days. I read them, and then re-read a lot.

We lost our dear Pastor, Elder E. J. Lambert, August 14, 1980. He had been in declining health for a few years. We sure miss his, his singing, prayers, and sermons. He could tell us so much in a short time. I feel he was waiting his call and that he is now at rest. He was pastor at Rehobath Church, El Dorado, Ark., where my membership is.

We are thankful the Lord sent us two able ministers, Elder David Turner and Elder Graydon Smith, both of Louisiana.

Last weekend (Sept. 26, 27, 28) I with my sisters, attended our Association in Spearsville, La. We sure enjoyed it. We had a good Association, and meeting friends.

Dear Editors, I am so glad you are still able to put the *Signs* out in this trying time. May the Lord bless and keep you all, and all others of like faith.

A Sister in hope,
Jane Carroll

Lucama, N.C.

Dear Editors of the *Signs*:

Enclosed you will find my check to renew my subscription to the *Signs of the Times* for two more years. It expired in October, 1980. Use the balance to help out for the *Signs*.

I do enjoy reading the *Signs of the Times*, and I hope it will keep being sent out. It is so much comfort for all of us, especially for people who are sick and can't get out.

C. D. Scott

EXTRACT ON SERMONS

And here we see the delusive effect of all preaching that does not flow from an exercised and feeling heart. The very truth itself, when not preached under the solemn unction and power of the Spirit, hardens instead of softens, and deludes instead of saves. The thick veil of self-deceit and hypocrisy is not to be rent asunder by such gentle hands as traced the sermon now under review. A more searching, cutting, stripping ministry is now required. A mere unexceptionable statement of doctrinal truth is not suited to the present state of the churches. Something more is wanted than a quiet sail in a pleasure boat on a summer evening upon the sea of truth. The insidious current is hurrying the vessel on towards the rapids, and nervous arms are needed to pull against the stream. How many young people are entrapped, we can call it by no other

terms, into a Calvinistic profession, without any work of grace upon their hearts, by smooth statements of doctrinal truth! And when thus launched, how awfully are they carried on in presumption, made members of churches, and borne up by the good opinion of others, until some dreadful fall, or a death-bed makes known to them the fatal secret, that they had lamps and wicks, but no oil. What lightness, too, is often propagated from the pulpit to the pew by the unhallowed levity of many Calvinistic preachers; and what a sad tendency has all this rash meddling with holy things to harden the consciences of their hearers, until sin loses all its hideousness, and they are landed in open or secret Antinomianism! A hard, dry statement of truth differs almost as much from God's mode of revealing truth in the Scriptures as it does from error itself. Truth, as God has revealed it, is clothed with experience, and mingled with precepts, warnings, and promises, so as to render it an appeal to the heart and conscience. There are in the Bible no dry, theoretical statements, no elaborate systems drawn out with mathematical precision, no amusing anecdotes, no jibes and jests, no ridicule poured on doubts and fears, no encouragement given to self-deceivers; in a word, nothing in the least resembling what is heard in many Calvinistic chapels. Let a poor child of God quietly read, under the blessed Spirit's sacred unction, a chapter of John's Gospel or Paul's Epistles, and compare the sweet emotions, the soft yet comforting sensations, the goings forth of his soul upwards to the Lord in faith, hope and love, or, it may be, the piercing convictions that wound his conscience as to his own baseness and vileness--let him, we say, compare the feelings of sorrow or joy created in his soul by the word of God with the effect produced on his spirit by the noisy rant, foolish anecdotes, trifling manner, light jests,

and occasional attempted flights of eloquence to be witnessed in many places, and under many ministers, who boast as though they had a monopoly of truth, letters patent from the court of heaven exclusively to preach the gospel. Will he not come away either wounded in spirit at the unhallowed lightness with which divine things have been handled? Or if he has been at all caught by the wildfire so liberally scattered, will not his conscience be afterwards grieved at his sin and folly? Will he find humility, filial fear, godly sorrow, tenderness of conscience, communion with Jesus, deadness to the world deepened in his soul? Or will his evidences be brightened, his faith strengthened, his hope enlarged, or his love to God and his saints sensibly increased?

Children of God, try the ministry under which you sit by these tests. It is not of God if it produce not good effects. It may be the gospel in the letter, but it is not the gospel in the spirit if it does not produce the spirit of the gospel. The tree is to be known by the effects; and if the fruit be bad, depend upon it the tree is bad also.

The Gospel Standard
February, 1843

FROM ARKANSAS

Calion, Arkansas

Dear Editors of the Signs of the Times,
As you know, our church building burned May 6, 1980. We are happy to report our progress of building our new Bethel Meetinghouse.

It was finished October 22, 1980; painted inside and out. We still need pews. However, Rehobeth members were kind enough to let us meet with them for four months. Our building was finished except for painting, so we had our first meeting the Saturday before the third Sunday in September. We had the dedication on Sunday, October 19,

1980.

We thank the readers of the *Signs of the Times* who contributed to our building fund. May God bless each of you, and we thank you Editors for printing our letter in the *Signs*.

Rehobeth members also were good to give us seven of their pews, and a Methodist church loaned us chairs until we can get pews.

Thanks again for your help and may God bless you all.

In bonds of love in the Lord
Jesus Christ,
J. A. & Annie Lee Davis

September 14, 1980

FALLS OF TAR RIVER
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH
ROCKY MOUNT, N.C.

ORDINATION OF BROTHER DANNY
TURNER TO THE FULL WORK OF THE
GOSPEL MINISTRY

A Presbytery was called consisting of the following: Elder D. B. Stokes, Elder W. L. Everett, Bro. Clyde Debow, Bro. Leroy Arrington; Deacons: Odis Daughtride, J. W. Whitfield, Laurence Holloway, Marcus Armstrong, Stedman Brown, E. D. Ward, W. E. Bland, Leon Griffin, Clyde Pridgen, Thelbert Hocutt, George Pearson, M. D. Simmons, Jr.

The Presbytery was called into conference. Conference was opened with Praise and Prayer by Elder D. B. Stokes. A motion was made and carried for Elder Stokes to sit as moderator. A motion was made and carried to call Sister Nina Pearson as clerk. The candidate was presented to the Presbytery by Deacons Odis Daughtride and Marcus Armstrong of The Falls of Tar River Primitive Baptist Church.

Elder Stokes asked the church if it was unanimously agreed to set Bro. Turner apart as a Minister. It was unanimously agreed. Elder Stokes asked for any questions from the Presbytery. Elder Everett said he had ridden with Bro. Turner many times and discussed many things of the Church at length. He said he seemed to be a thinking person. Elder Everett asked, "Do you believe in the total complete sovereignty of God as He deals with His creatures, on this earth"?

Answer: "Yes, I do, I can not believe otherwise." Brother Clyde Debow said Bro. Danny had been called to a precious and Holy Call. "Our blessings go with him. Let us not take this lightly. He asked, "Did God know us before we were born; that the Lord prepared our steps; that the Lord called us; the Lord touches our lips and brings from our hearts what He wants us to proclaim?" The answer to all was "yes".

Bro. Turner is asked if he had anything to say, "I know I am just a man and by myself I can do nothing. I know God called me. Have patience with me. Love me and my wife. My road will be rocky. I love you."

Elder Everett said "What is said today will be forgotten. What you learn will not be forgotten. The Church will be patient. Sometimes it seems everyone is against you. This is not true. Remember when a decision is to be made, go to God. It may or may not be when or what you want. Lean on the Lord first and then your companion. You must have her support. Godspeed to you both."

Elder Stokes read from Timothy the qualifications of a Bishop. "I cannot describe what you will experience. A life of joy, sorrow, and being constantly criticized. Remember this is because they love you. Criticism is not to hurt you. There are many dark hours before you. Pam, his life belongs to Christ and those he serves. The more you do the less respect you get. It's easy to forget what man wants done, but you can not forget what God wants. You are a servant. Do not tell the Church what to do. You will go to places and won't receive any thanks. If God called you, it will come back to you from the least expected source. Be patient, do not preach for money, but the relief of your soul. People will misuse you and talk about you, these people don't love you. Do not satisfy people, satisfy your conscience. Do not let criticism bother you. Go as you are led. Go and baptize in the name of the Lord, not the name of the Church. Be satisfied with yourself. Obey no man, but the one who called you. You will be criticized but remember, He was also."

The Elders laid hands on the candidate in prayer; asking God to take his life and use it; be with him and strengthen him. Give him faith and accompany his companion. Grace abound in his life. Stand still and wait. Have a "Thus saith the Lord" and the Bible. The

Presbytery presented Elder Turner back to the church as an ordained minister.

Moved and agreed the minutes be read. Moved and agreed the minutes be received. Moved and agreed; one copy be reserved for the Church records; one copy to the "Signs of the Times." Conference was closed with prayer by Elder Stokes. Moved and agreed conference adjourn.

Elder D. B. Stokes, Moderator
Nina Pearson, Clerk

FROM LOUISIANA

Rayville, La.

Dear Editors,

Another year is almost gone and it is time to renew our subscription to the dear *Signs of the Times*. We look forward to reading it each month.

May the good Lord continue to bless the writers and you Editors to get the paper out to us.

Mrs. Earl Wilson

REPORT OF HOPEWELL MEETING 5th SUNDAY IN JUNE, 1980

Dear Elder Poole,

The good Lord saw fit to seal a three-day meeting at Hopewell Church, Winnsboro, Texas, with His divine blessings. The meeting took place the 5th weekend in June and the ministers present included Elders Morris, Wall, Shipman, Hamrick (present Pastor of Hopewell Church), Burkhalter, Haygood, and McLaughlin, from Texas; Elders Turner, and Grayden Smith from Louisiana; Elder C. Moon from Alabama; Elder Townley from Arkansas; Elder Winfrey from Kansas; yourself from Maryland; and Elder Lambert who has recently departed to be with Christ. Licentiatees present included Brothers Vaughn and myself from Texas; Brother Lackey from Oklahoma, and Brother B. Moon from Alabama. Collectively, these ministers delivered 22 sermons.

Though some may feel that 22 sermons in three days is somewhat excessive, the Lord so blessed the speakers and the congregation to where all present were given to rejoice in the blessed truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Whenever this is the case, time and sermons seem to pass quickly. Before we knew it, we were saddened by the fact that the meeting was ending, yet comforted by the prospects of many more such meetings in the future.

In an age when Primitive Baptists are fewer and farther between, it is a mark of God's mercy that He has seen fit to bless us with modes of transportation whereby we can travel long distances in a short time and still be with one another in person, though never separated in spirit. Thus at the Hopewell meeting, we were providentially blessed to have believers from afar, as well as from near. At such times, we are reminded that although God's people may have different natural backgrounds, they have the same spiritual background, as reflected by their common spiritual beliefs, one of which is that salvation is solely of the Lord. There are many people who say they believe that salvation is of the Lord, but by the time they get through explaining their views of it, man's hand has gotten into the act, and their religion is proved to be of the earth, earthy. On the other hand, God's people who have been taught not to rely on the arm of flesh but solely on the mighty arm of the Lord do not say they believe that salvation is of the Lord, but then in the same breath as it were, explain it away. Instead, they not only believe it, then in no uncertain terms proclaim, sing, and live it! They will also travel long distances to be with those who do likewise.

Thus, at the Hopewell meeting all seemed blessed to speak, sing, and live upon the same truths. The blessed truth that salvation is of the Lord is music indeed to the ears of those who have learned by experience that the arm of

flesh, instead of helping to save, can only help condemn. These same people are given to seek salvation solely from Jesus, whose very name means "Jehovah saves". The last sermon preached was most fitting in that it brought out the extent of the love Jesus has for His bride, a love so great that He was willing to do whatever was necessary to save her and to present her as an appropriate spouse, without spot or blemish.

It was also most fitting that right after this sermon and before services ended, the Lord was pleased to present two dear sisters as candidates for baptism. They were Sisters Welch and Sparkman from Houston. Members of Shepherd Fold Church who were present at the Hopewell meeting voted unanimously to receive them. These dear sisters were later baptized in Houston by Elder Haygood.

Each time the Lord is pleased to draw His people together and to bless their meeting, it is but one meeting closer to the time when they will meet to part no more. That future meeting will contain the fulness of what can now be enjoyed only in part. May we ever be given to yearn for that meeting.

In One Precious Hope,
Jimmy Hamrick

THE GAIN OF GODLINESS, OR THE BEGGAR'S PROFIT

Proverbs 18:20

"A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled."

By the belly, here, I presume, is meant the heart or the soul. It is said that the prodigal would fain have filled his belly with husks: but a better banquet was provided for him; namely, the fatted calf and best robe, which is Christ crucified, and his imputed righteousness; neither of which are food for the bowels, but for the soul. Again, Elihu, who declares that he was inspired, and that the Spirit

of God had given him understanding, finding the Spirit to operate strongly upon Him, says, that his belly is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles. (Job 32:19) And so the Saviour says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit." But it must mean the heart, for it is the heart, and not the bowels, that is the seat of divine inspiration. "I will give them a new heart and a new spirit".

This heavenly merchant in my text, whose belly is to be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth, and to be filled with the increase of his lips, cannot be the person that the wise man calls a prating fool that shall fall; for a fool is not a praying man, and he that falls can never be said to be satisfied; nor can this merchant be a man employed in temporal concerns, for it is not by talking, but by working with the hands, that the generality of men are fed and filled in a temporal sense. "He that laboureth, laboureth for himself, for his mouth craveth it of him". This is working for the belly, not talking. Hence it appears that this trader in my text is not an earthly trader, for in the general they live by labour, not by talk, no, nor a prating fool about religion, for the kingdom is not in word; "In all labour there is profit but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury". But this man that I am describing hath his belly satisfied by the fruit of his mouth, and filled by the increase of his lips.

Again, this trader must be a hungry man, a man that hath an appetite, for he cannot be said to be filled if he is not in some measure empty; for God filled the hungry with good things, but as for the rich, he sends them empty away: it is they that hunger and thirst after righteousness that are blessed, and they shall be filled: But, "Wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger" Furthermore, this empty man is one

that is empty of good, empty of righteousness, of the bread of life, and of the satisfying grace of God in Christ: and he must be in a good measure emptied of self, or self-sufficiency, or self-righteousness, of human confidence, and of all satisfaction in and from dead works and a form of godliness: for the worldlywise sinner is too proud to hear the gospel, and the self-righteous too rich to beg a covering, and the full soul loatheth the honey-comb, and therefore will hardly beg for that which his soul hateth.

This man in my text is a praying soul, not a hearer of the word only; for, if his belly be filled by hearing only, and not by praying, his belly must be satisfied with the fruit of another's mouth, and not with his own: but my text says that a man's belly shall be satisfied by the fruit of his mouth; that is, his own belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his own mouth. I know that there is no satisfaction, nor fulness, for a sensible sinner, but in Christ Jesus. I know that in him pardon and peace, regeneration and adoption, are promised, a new heart and a new spirit is to be given, and everything else, both spiritual and temporal; but then it is added, "For all these things I will be inquired of by the house of Israel, that I may do these things for them." So that without prayer nothing can be expected. The prodigal wanted bread, and he begged it; the publican wanted mercy, and he craved it by prayer; Hannah wanted a son, and she begged for one and got him; David wanted pardon, and he prayed and obtained it: the belly of all these were satisfied by the fruit of their mouth. And how can a man's belly be filled without it, when God declares that he will pour out his fury upon the heathen that know him not, and upon the families of the earth that call not upon his name?

Besides, can a man belong to the house of David, and not have the spirit of grace and supplication poured out upon him, which is promised to all the

royal family? No, by no means. Again, can I conclude that I belong to God if I have no communion with him in prayer, or that I am a believer, if my prayer brings nothing in from him? "Verily God hath heard me", saith the Psalmist, "And not turned away my prayers, not his mercy from me". "This is the confidence that we have in him," says John, "that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him".

An hungry man's belly is to be satisfied by the fruit of his mouth, for he draws this conclusion; if I am an enemy to God, he will not regard me; if I worship him not in the spirit, I cannot be accepted; if I pray not in faith, I cannot expect an answer: but God hath heard me, and therefore regards me, respects me, relieves me, and accepts me in his dear Son; and therefore he must be my friend, not my enemy; my father, and not my angry judge; my God in covenant, and not a consuming fire to me. The apostles prayed till the place was shook where they were assembled, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost. And thus Cornelius prayed till he was ordered to send for Peter, through whose ministry the word of life and Spirit of God came upon him and his. "Ask", saith the Lord, "and you shall receive, that your joy may be full"; for a man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth. David prayed for pardon, peace, and life; Jabez to be kept from evil; Jacob for a blessing; and Paul for the removal of Satan's buffetings. And all of them prevailed; they got their doubts and fears removed, their minds settled, their evidences brightened, and their interests in the Lord made clear and plain to them; and these things satisfied them, and they found quietness in their belly. (Job 20:20)

"By the increase of his lips shall he be filled". "Godliness with contentment is great gain, having the promise of the life

that now is, and of that which is to come". Solomon prayed for wisdom, and he got riches and honour into the bargain, which is what he did not ask for. This increase of the lips mentioned in my text is answers to prayer; which consists in an increase of knowledge, of experience, of faith, of life, of peace, and of love, comfort, joy, and strength. Some folks make many long prayers, and thing that they shall be heard for their much speaking; but, if God gives no answer, there is no increase; and, if no increase, how can they be filled? Great is the delight of the Lord in the prayers of the faithful. "Let me hear thy voice, let me see thy face, sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely". The prayer of the upright is the Lord's delight. "Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you; for he that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth", etc. etc. And again, "Call upon me in the time of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it". O how great is the condescension of God to listen to the prayers of such poor rebels! And how sweet and savoury are those blessings and gracious answers that are obtained by much importunity in prayer! Reader, as long as one doubt remains touching the goodness and safety of thy state, if suspicions are working, if any fears are cherished, if any pro and con in the court of conscience, if any jealousies; let these things be manifested, let them be sifted to the bottom. Let them be canvassed over, and set to rights; make straight paths for thy feet; remember that thy belly is to be filled, and thou art to be satisfied with the fruit of thy mouth, and with the increase of thy lips, there is a great gain in godliness, a choice revenue in wisdom, and a blessed increase in prayer. Begging in the most profitable branch of all the heavenly trade. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make

them inherit the throne of glory". But without prayer what can be expected, when God hath said that, for all the spiritual and temporal blessings promised, he will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do these things for them? Read Ezekiel 36.

William Huntington

FROM NEW JERSEY

Irvington, N.J.

November 15, 1980

Dear Pastor and Sister Prescott:

Greetings to you and the dearly beloved in Christ at Smithwicks Creek this fourth Sunday in November, 1980. I sometimes wonder if what us human beings refer to as time eludes others the same as it does me. It is not only unbelievable, but incomprehensible that we are only a few weeks away from Christmas, 1980. It seems as if Christmas 1979 only took place a few weeks ago.

As for myself, I must ask what kept me from realizing the importance of working while it was day; until I saw the sun sinking below the horizon? Thus I must ask me, where were you early in the morning of your life? Where were you at mid-day? or in the middle of the afternoon? Were you not aware that the sunset of life would overtake you so suddenly until you are about to watch it go down? However aware I am that sin abounds, darkness prevails, perversion reigns—allow those of us in our latter years to look back upon Calvary where the Lamb of God died for our sins. And thus take consolation in believing that through Faith we have the assurance that our salvation draweth nigh. Thanks to a gracious God who allowed His own precious body to be broken, and blood to be shed, in order to accomplish for us what we could not acquire by any means available to a perverted and lost humanity. In that these mortal bodies will be made immortal, thanks to the miraculous resurrection of an ever

living Lord Jesus Christ.

What is required of us in order to assure us that our Saviour lives and loves and forgives and saves to the uttermost? Certainly not that we be good, for He not only knew that we wouldn't; He also knew that we couldn't by any amount of human effort justify His acceptance of us into His presence, or allow us to dwell for all time and eternity in that promised house of many mansions. That is only as far away as thought, for those who through faith hold fast to that primitive scriptural promise made to all believers almost two thousand years ago. And because I do not believe that John 14:1-4 could ever become repetitious, even if we read it ten thousand times ten thousand times, I am going to repeat it here. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." What a beautiful revelation, immediately following Peter's hypocrisy, and almost betrayal of the Saviour.

A little later in John's Gospel Philip begins to ask questions that indicates a lack of faith, which is the equivalent of momentary doubt. All this proves that because of our inherited Adamic nature, we need to pray, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief". I often wonder if the evangelist on television, the minister in the pulpit, the professor of Christian theology whose writings seem so closely related to the Holy Spirit ever experiences the feeling of occasional despair that some of the rest of us experience. Most of them seem so confident that everything is under control; because they have a direct "hot line" to God, and therefore the need will never arise when they might be inclined to put

their thumb on the panic button. All I have to say is that I envy them with every molecule of passion within me, and most certainly this type of envy is not sinful, because I do not envy anything they have that is materialistic, but I do envy their monopoly on the Spiritual plane, if it could be proved real.

Is there anything mysterious with our desires to share the absolute assurances that some claim to have in their relationship with the unknown that prompts them to tell us that they know exactly what God has done, what He is doing, and what He is going to do? God forgive me if I am erroneous concluding that there is more human hallucination involved in their claims than there is Scriptural revelation.

This is a quote (and it wasn't taken from the "Readers' Digest", but from the Bible), "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out". My prayer is therefore that I be able to justifiably proclaim in the twilight of my days, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith". Remember me in your prayers.

Dedicately in Christ Jesus Name,
John Manning

FROM VIRGINIA

Meadows of Dan, Va.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

Tonight I could not sleep and it is some after midnight, and with the saints on my mind, maybe God will direct me a little. I feel I am one that needs the love and fellowship of the saints more than all the others. Tonight while reading the account of the sufferings of the Apostles in the Book of Acts, of Paul and Silas, after being beaten and put in prison, their feet fast in the stocks, they prayed at midnight, and sang praises unto God, and the

prisoners heard them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately the doors were opened, and everyone's bands were loosed. Oh! the wonderful works of God Almighty can never be told by human tongue. I love to hear the chosen and called servants of God tell the wonderful works of God.

The keeper of the prison who was commanded to keep Paul and Silas safely was baptized that night, straightway. He also washed the stripes of Paul and Silas, took them into his house, gave them food, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Afterwards they went into the house of Lydia, and saw the brethren. They comforted them, and departed thence.

Those beatings did not keep the chosen servants of God from preaching the gospel, or the saints from listening to them. I do not know if Paul and Silas sung a hymn, but it does state that they sung praises unto God. I do believe God indited the prayers and singing, and they did rejoice in their sufferings, and were glad that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name.

Paul declared that he had not shuned to declare the whole counsel of God, and bonds and afflictions awaited him, yet none of these things made him afraid, neither did he count his life dear to himself. He desired to finish his course with joy.

Paul admonished the brethren to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock, to feed the church of God, which He had purchased with His own blood. Paul also stated that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock. Therefore, he commanded them to watch, because he had warned them everyone night and day with tears.

Paul said he had coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel. God did supply all his needs. After he gave these wonderful admonitions, he kneeled

down, and prayed with them all, and they all wept sore, fell on his neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. It seems at times I can see these beautiful scenes in my mind, and feel like I would have loved to have been in their midst.

There can nothing be compared to the sufferings of Him for His saints, and I beg for grace to follow after Him and love Him more and more.

The chosen Apostle Paul did suffer for Jesus' Name and praised God for it all. Surely the wrath of man shall praise God and the remainder He shall restrain. I believe I know in a small measure what that is.

The pathway that God has ordained that we walk in may seem hard but His chosen shall praise Him all the way. I love the old songs, old tunes, the old way in which our forefathers walked. They had a lot to endure and so will we if we are His chosen.

The world can have the glittering society and splendor, but give me the sufferings and give me the mind to Praise God in it, and let me face a frowning world.

The storms only melt the dross, and when He has finished with His saints, they shall appear as gold. It takes sorrows to prepare the saints for the house not made with hands. So I beg God to keep me low and humble, yet stand for the truth, or in the truth, and wash me in His blood and I shall be clean in this washing.

I remain a helpless sinner,
Pauline Spencer

P.S. I loved the poem selected by Elder Lambert before God called him to rest, printed in the October, 1980, *Signs*. It suited me very much.

FROM MISSOURI

Poplar Bluff, Mo.

Dear Editors of the Signs,

My subscription expired in June, but

you have continued sending the publication to me. I appreciate it very much and am sorry I have delayed to send money for the next year. I am sending you money to pay up to next June.

There are so many articles in the *Signs* that I just don't want to miss. May God bless all of you is my prayer.

Mrs. Ellie Womack

THE SINNER'S FRIEND

My dear brother Robert, The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our dear elder Brother, has permitted and helped a poor wretch to draw near to him once more. I had been trying to get nigh to him for some time; but creature strength must fail, and with me it very soon does fail. Never was there a more ready and quick hand at giving up the fight than I! Last night, the dryness, the formality, the hardness of my spirit seemed to increase upon me as it has done before. I arose from my knees, thinking I never knew what communion with God was. In reality, every word seemed to stink of horrid hypocrisy. I was obliged to give it up. I hated myself, my house, the chair that I leaned upon, the sound of my feet as I walked; everything about me and of myself I hated. I retired to bed in this wretched state, and lay awake (as it seemed to me) a good part of the night. However, I found at times my heart beat towards the sinner's Friend, and I do, from my heart, offer up thousands of thanks to him. He has once more helped me to cast myself upon him. Yes, brother; I grew so fast, my arms became so long and strong, that I took a firm hold on Father, Son, and Spirit, the blessed Three-One Jehovah, and was enabled to plead and pray for every poor buffeted, tempted, beaten-back soul in the wilderness, that the waters of salvation might gush forth, that the dry ground might become springs, and that thirsty souls might drink, and lift up their heads once again. Aye, I found the promise fitted the

prayer, and the prayer the promise. Heartfelt groans and cries are sure to be heard and answered; though patience must have her perfect work, that we may be entire, lacking nothing that God has promised. We and our need fit the promise, and both fit Jesus; for we are in him and the promises are all in him, yea and more, our blessed Father is in them: "I in Thee and Thou in me"! O what words are these! What a fitness! "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they, also, may be one in us".

Well, my brother, the poor wretch caught a glimpse of God as his Father, Jesus as his Redeemer, the Holy One as his Quickener, Leader, and Comforter. I wondered to feel such things again; I say again, for it is the same I have felt before. I am sure enough, and know by the taste; sweet and precious Jesus is the strength of our memory. I have felt it before; I have, my brother, I have. I, after the flesh and the devil, am a liar; but after the Spirit, as born of God, I am like him, and am of the truth. I am quite refreshed. I hate my unbelieving, mistrusting heart, but I love the Lord, because he is love, resting in love, never varying. No "shadow of turning" is in him; he is always the same. Though we believe not, he abideth faithful. He cannot deny himself; no; he is still full of compassion. My soul this truth will tell; he heals all my maladies, and makes me say, "I'm well". I don't know how to write about him; he is so great and good. Blessing, honour, praise, and power be unto the Lamb for ever! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

S.E.

The Gospel Standard
February, 1843

FROM MARYLAND

Chestertown, Md.

Dear Editors of the Signs,

Soon it will be time for my subscription renewal, and since I've just been

blessed abundantly on my 76th birthday, I feel I want to share the Lord's bounty with the ones I love so much. Please renew my subscription for two years and use the rest for wherever it is needed most in sending out the *Signs*.

The longer I live, the sweeter the messages from inspired pastors becomes. We know our time here is not too much longer, in nature, but eternal with out Heavenly Father and it gives much real joy to think of that day.

May the entire staff of the *Signs* be blessed to carry on printing the blessed word of God, pure and undefiled by man's manipulations, for the edification of the readers, especially those who hear good preaching from the pulpit so seldom.

God bless each one in a special way. I love you all for Christ's sake.

Ruth Lucht

Roanoke, Virginia

Dear Elder Poole,

Last weekend I heard you were afflicted in body. I had not considered that you could have an ailing body, but thought only that you were strong in the faith, of which Jesus is the Author and Finisher, who was once delivered to the saints; the faith of God's elect. This is the very foundation which Paul also laid, Jesus Christ; which heed must be taken by them that build thereon for no other foundation can be laid. It is not the foundation spoken of in Heb. 1:10, but a foundation that shall remain. Jesus is that foundation, and He is the Chief corner stone. This is the same that said to Peter, "What is that to thee, follow thou me". May you by the gift of His grace have that special favor of "casting all your cares upon Him, for He careth for you".

This is the One who has purchased you, spirit, soul, and body. Nothing done by Him is left half done, for He is the head over all things to His body, which

is the Church.

May we, as having obtained mercy be found upon that Foundation, and in that Foundation as Almighty God beholds us as His acceptable work in Christ Jesus and know that He afflicts in His wisdom, mercy, and love, and all that He does is for the good of His little ones to bring them to the end in perfect, appointed peace, and none but a child of God tried in the furnace, can have that moment of rest and comfort, even in pain that enables by grace to say that no affliction I may have could compare with what I hope Thou hast endured for me.

Once I was afflicted with the knowledge of sin until I felt I could not live another moment and I had no hope: Eternal death in the lake that burns forever was the weight upon my heart and in the very last wave I said, "It is my just desert. Thy will, not mine, be done", and my next knowledge, I was in a new world. The day before, death was in all I beheld. In the new, it was Life. In His mercy I witnessed some of Isaiah 55:12. (The good Lord did, in mercy, give me a moment this spring, by faith, right in the midst of that never to be forgotten morning, and I was silent at the sight of life and brightness and the peace that attended. Later I could say, "He doth deliver".) The burden and fear of eternal death that I was in bondage to so many years is felt and feared no more. Except when a thought arises as I view my standing in Adam, vanity, pride, and everything that I thought in the day of deliverance, I would know or feel no more, still troubles, so that I have ask again and often, "Has He begun a good work in me, or am I resting on that foundation that shall perish when tried by fire?" O! for more evidence that the work is real; that I am in and upon that foundation that is laid that abideth ever.

John said, "We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren". O! where is the love, when

one says, "I am of this one," and "I am of that one"; and "I cannot bear with this one or that one", when only a few years ago we laid our case before God and desired we could change place with an animal or as in my case, the Summer grass; anything to escape the righteous judgment of the law against sinners. Most of us felt of all His creation, we deserved hell more than any and yet when the time had come, I hope repentance unto life was granted and in Christ I stood before God justified as if no offence had been committed. With a measure of the knowledge that we have obtained mercy by His grace that was treasured in Christ before the world began, may we who feel we can do nothing without Him, hear Him saying to us, "Follow me".

Dear Brother, most of this was written by hand the 21st, but have failed to see any worth in it except to let you know the things I write are more to me if they sound in a way of chastisement, for I fail to see in me the beautiful manifestation of life that I behold in the precious brethren. If you should find a word among these many of worth, thank our Saviour who "Hath done all things well". The Lord keep you and bless you.

In Hope,
(Elder) Noel F. Conner

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EDITORIAL

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1.

Who is this scripture talking to? Who does it have meaning to? We could answer simply by saying that it is talking “to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” But that is not the message of the scripture. The message is that there is now no condemnation.

The full meaning of this scripture can be felt only by someone who feels to be condemned. Do we not find within us sinful thoughts, sinful lusts, the working of corruption in our hearts to cause us to cry out, “For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” Romans 7:18. Can we find anything good dwelling in our old carnal self or flesh?

If you had no faulty plumbing in your house, you would have no need to call a plumber. If your house was not on fire, you would feel very foolish calling the fire department. If you don't feel condemned by God's just and holy law, the message of “no condemnation” would mean very little to you. What is a joyful sound to one is foolishness to another. “For the preaching of the cross

is to them that perish foolishness...” I Cor. 1:18.

Dear sinners, how do you feel? Have you exhausted all of your own means to get out from under the condemnation of the law? Are you not aware of your sinful nature? Do you have daily conflicts within you? Are you ready to ask is there anyone like me? Why? Because you seem to stand so far from the things of God and godliness. You may say, my mind and thoughts go astray most of my waking hours. I have bouts with my temper, say and do things that are so contrary to what I feel a child of God should do. I so often lust after the things of this world, and in my thoughts and mind harbor idols that come between God and me. It seems I'm always partaking of the things that I would not and failing to do the things I would. How can I hope to be in Christ Jesus?

You see that you certainly had no control over your first birth. Then you feel with awe that “wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.” Romans 5:12. There are no escape loopholes in this scripture. All have sinned.

And when you look at your own sins, the guilt and weight of them seem to get heavier and heavier. You realize more and more the purity of God's law. His commandments are good, just, and holy, yet they are broken in an uncontrollable manner. “For the good that I would, I do not, but the evil I would not, that I do.” Romans 7:19.

Yet, dear ones, if we by the grace of God are given to feel that we are corrupt sinners, is it not true evidence that we are live sinners? Yes, we are sinners but we are not dead sinners. If we were dead sinners, we would not be so aware of the “weights and the sin which doeth so easily beset us.” It is through His grace that we are alive to our sins and corrupt nature. If we, through the quickening

and teaching of the Holy Spirit, have been made alive to our sinful and corrupt nature, our weakness and inability to alter our condition; we are then ready to cry out with the Apostle Paul, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death." Romans 7:24. If this be so with us, then my beloved friends, I believe this is true evidence that we are live sinners.

Your interest is sparked with Nicodemus when Jesus tells him, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3. Then you realize that you have no more power over this second birth than you have over your first birth. The quickening power is completely and totally out of your hands.

And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins..." Eph. 2:1. You cannot quicken yourself. If you are born again, it is "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:13.

So then you are condemned in a corner from which there is seemingly no escape. But this corner acts as the most important turning point of your life. It turns you from self to Savior.

Remember in your schooldays when someone who broke the school's laws had to go sit in a corner? It could be a sorrowful place, but usually a lesson was learned. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ..." Gal. 3:24. This process may unfold rapidly as it did with Paul on the road to Damascus, or it may be very gradual over a period of many months and even years. But the results are the same: you are turned away from self to Savior.

And, oh what a turning away! When Jesus shines his countenance upon your soul and implants an earnest hope in your heart, the whole world seems to take on a new glow! You see Jesus everywhere! His is your all in all! Many of the beautiful old songs come to life

because they echo your experience:

"Jesus! my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King,
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring."
(From "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds")

"On the wings of his love
I was carried above
Ev'ry sin, and temptation, and pain!
I could scarcely believe
That I ever should grieve,
That I ever should suffer again."
(From "O how happy are they")

"Bright garlands of immortal joy
Shall bloom on ev'ry head;
While sorrow, sighing, and distress,
Like shadows, all are fled."
(From "Sing, all ye ransomed of the Lord")

Now our scriptural text leaps alive with power and beauty. The meaning of gospel as good news is clearly evident. It is exceedingly good news to your soul that "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." You feel to be in Christ Jesus; you have no desire to walk after the flesh; your overwhelming desire is to worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth forever and ever.

But eventually, the rich fullness of your experience seems to slip away. Cares of this world creep in. That once solid faith is being attacked by its counterpart, unbelief. And you begin to think, how could such a sinner as I really expect to be included in that precious flock?

Again, some of the old songs seem to express your sentiments as if they were written especially for you:

"Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?"
(from "O for a closer walk with God.")

"I find myself out of the way;
My thoughts are often gone astray;
Like one alone I seem to be:
Oh! is there any one like me?"
(from "I am a stranger here below")

It is a wonderful source of comfort to find that there are truly others like you, others who believe and feel the

sovereignty of God and the depravity of man. You find considerable comfort in the companionship they give, in the songs you sing, in the preaching you hear, and in the Word you read.

You feel certain that surely these people are the children of God. And your certainty is anchored in scripture when you read, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. You see that this fruit is brought forth not in order to have union with Christ, but because of a union with Christ. You have no spiritual independent existence out of him. Thus without a union with Christ, you cannot be a partaker of any spiritual fruit. So all the fruit of the Spirit, your faith, hope, love and the other graces flow out of a personal spiritual and experimental union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Every quickened child of God is to bring forth fruit. "For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10.

But sometimes you wonder if you have any of these fruits. What are they? Some, for example, include fear, faith, love, and hope.

One of the first fruits ripened by the Spirit is that of fear. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.-- When you first understand the consequences of being condemned, it can be exceedingly fearful. Yet the Lord sees fit to make fear a fruitful attribute. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 11:10.

As the fruit of faith comes to mind, we can only think of the Savior. He is the author and finisher of our faith. We firmly believe that he is indeed our only way, truth, and life. And this faith must be alive. It gives us access to the promises of the gospel and at the same time, it demands fruitful works. "Faith

without works is dead." James 2:20.

Love toward God's people is a fruit that seems to give strength to my hope more than any other. A special love for the brethren seems to flow from breast to breast. There are no strangers. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren...." I John 3:14. What a comforting scripture!

Hope is a fruit I believe we feel most of the time. Sometimes it seems to sink out of sight, yet even then you would not trade it for all the riches of this world. Even then, it is the "hope we have as an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast...." Heb. 6:19. It is an earnest expectation of gospel promises yet unseen.

"Who walk not after the flesh" We may all feel to walk after the flesh most of our time, but what is it to walk in this way? They that are led, or walk, after the flesh will never be led to the sight of their sins; for to walk after the flesh is to walk in darkness of this world, in ignorance of Christ and his grace, walking according to the course of this world. To walk after the flesh is to be continually pursuing and doing the things that pleases the flesh -- whether it includes the profane things of the world or whether it is a more refined and deceptive form of godliness under a robe of worldly religion that glorifies the flesh by works and limits God's power in the work of eternal salvation. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." II Tim. 3:5.

"But after the Spirit." To walk after the Spirit is to walk in "newness of life." He will lead you to a sight of your sins and misery, to a clear understanding of your fallen nature. He will lead you out of self and to a crucified Christ. He will lead you into a love for the truth and a love for those who have had like experiences. He will lead you into this gospel truth. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit,

and rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. 3:3.

If the Holy Spirit has brought divine life and light into your soul and feeling into your conscience, you will be made to realize that you of yourself have no way of putting away sin, nothing to bring you close to God, no way to fulfill the demands of his righteous law, nothing to deliver you from condemnation, nothing to remove your doubts and fears and nothing to make you meet for heaven. The grand truth is we are just as helpless to partake of divine things after regeneration as we were before.

"But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." Gal. 4:4. Jesus Christ came into this world for your sake, to save his people from their sins. To fulfill the law to a jot and tittle, to satisfy justice and bring in mercy, he paid double for all the sins of his people. He is the end of the law for righteousness for you. His stripes heal you. His blood cleanseth you from all your sins. His righteousness delivered you from the curse and wrath of God. You are in a sanctuary in Christ. Your sins were condemned in the flesh of Christ and punishment fully rendered. Justice being once satisfied cannot demand a second satisfaction. Therefore there is no sentence of condemnation against you from the mouth of God because you are in Christ Jesus.

May we be forever thankful for blessed evidences, whose certainty is encouched in an all-powerful, unchangeable God. "Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:6. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." John 10:28. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things

present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38, 39.

Three words out of our text embody a force sufficiently strong to carry you past the chilly waters of death and into life everlasting. These three words are "in Christ Jesus" He is the resurrection, the truth, and the life. And when your time comes to face the sting of death, may that sting be removed by the loving presence of the Savior. May you truly feel to be in Christ Jesus, where there is victory over sin and the grave.

(Elder) Joe L. Hamrick

Dear Editors and all,

Please excuse me being late. My 92nd birthday is only two months away. My eyesight is so weak I can only read a little.

I have enjoyed this blessed Book of Truth a goodly portion of my life! The dear Lord has been so merciful to this unworthy one through all these years. Oh, may I sing praises to His great Holy Name to the end of the way and with the songwriter,

"Be life's future bright or stormy,
O, my Father, lead thou me".

Thank you, A check is enclosed for my renewal.

In love and sweet hope,
Ela R. Watson

FROM ALABAMA

Jasper, Alabama
Dear Editors and all of like precious faith:

Enclosed find a check for two years subscription of the *Signs of the Times*, and use the balance as you see fit.

I enjoy the *Signs* very much and am made to rejoice in the finished work of the Almighty God.

I have just returned from attending

the Powell Valley Association. Much joy was experienced, and I was made to believe "The Lord was truly in that place".

May God be with you all and us; lead, guide, and direct us all the days we spend here.

Yours in bonds of love,
C. I. Randolph

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

FOR THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES NUMBER 1

Harrisburgh, Ia.

January 25, 1836

Brother Beebe: We are in a world of conflicting interests and contending parties. These act as causes, producing fudes and turmoils. These imbitter the sweets of social life, and blend their unhallowed influence in almost every circle of community. This bane of social harmony, not only infects the political and fraternal associations; but too often, like an evil genus, are seen exhibiting their many magic and enticing forms in the theological departments, alluring the weak and unwary, and thus producing division in the ranks of that once united band, which like an army with banners, marching in the strength of the Lord, have struck with terror and dismay, every opposing foe, and filled the hearts of aliens with appalling consternation.

I have not been altogether an indifferent or idle spectator, while these tragical scenes have been passing before the ordeal of the public. I have seen much to admire, and much to deplore. I have observed truth and error in contrast, and while some of the partially concealed beauties of the former, and many of the partially covered deformities of the latter have been exhibited by the comparison; I have believed an increase of knowledge,

under the divine control, would be the result.

From the earliest ages of christianity, up to the present time, men, even christians, have been prone to be diverted from gospel simplicity, by will-worship, feigned words, vain philosophy, and worldly policy. Spacious displays of these have perverted many, and the glossy and sophistical covering, has so effectually consealed the deformity of the fraud, that for a time it was nourished as virtue, and extolled as holy benevolence. Under these expanded appearances of charity and disinterested philanthropy, many, no doubt, who love the truth and wish to walk in it, have inadvertently been engaged with all their energies, not seeing the evil tendency of their course.

While we consider all these disguises, and the various seducing schemes in which error intrudes itself upon the child of grace, and our own weakness and imperfection; let us learn with meekness and patience to bear with each other. Have we always escaped the snare?--Have our feet well nigh slipped?--If not, give God the glory; but if we have--and this is most likely--let us with patient forbearance, brotherly love, and long suffering, endeavour to convince others of their error, from which we have but just escaped, and give them time to repent; yet while we thus act, let plain faithfulness mark every step, and a zeal for truth prompt all our actions. While we earnestly contend for the faith and order of the gospel, we shall not be crowned except we strive lawfully--let us endeavour so to run that we may obtain. The Baptist Church, as their history shows, was set up at the day of Penticost. Their history from that time to this, is correctly traced among the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont, and not through the Papal See, or in the church of Rome. Taking this for granted, as all Baptists do; it follows of course, that they are intruding on the

privileges of the Romish church, when they claim those plans of which she is the proprietor. It will be vain to pretend that those schemes, which of late have so generally spoiled the peace and divided the ranks of the Baptist, was first invented by the Church of Rome. I well remember when the missionary plan was first put into operation among the Baptists of the west, the advocates of it would argue that the church of Rome subdued nations by this plan and converted multitudes to her views in this way, and if error was so successfully propagated by this plan, truth could be spread with equal success. This is, then, a scheme of Rome, which to say the least of it, the Baptists have seized upon in order to extend truth, by the same means which anti-christ had employed for the spread of error. There are two schemes exerted for the introduction of the millennial glory: one is to amalgamate all sects irrespective of any principles, and by this "modus operandi", to destroy all party names, and so effect an universal harmony and communion, and then all party strife and confusion must die, and the millennial glories will blaze forth in all its translucent splendour on every nation, expelling every shade of Papal and Pagan superstition from the religious hemisphere and burn like a flaming beacon on every hill; and the benighted heathen will come from all the habitations of cruelty, and pay the tribute of their grateful hearts, at the shrine of the King of kings. Others with as much zeal and knowledge suppose this latter day glory, with all its hallowed splendour, will be ushered in by a different policy. These have observed that wealth and learning give power--these being the two greater engines of human policy, and the possession of these gives influence, and facilitates enterprize; and knowing how the Pope extended his holy sovereignty and dominion by these agents, combined with a show of benevolence

and divine philanthropy, they have seized upon the same combination, and with equal zeal have engaged in a similar enterprize. To obtain learning seminaries and theological schools for religious instruction are got up to prepare men for missionary labours; and then send these to the heathen and destitute, to instruct them; and to give children the proper bias in infancy, to patronize this plan after their maturity. Sunday Schools are employed; and as common school books, or the Scriptures, will not give these young twigs the proper bend to suit the plan, tracts must be printed, suitable to effect this end, and a library of these be procured for the Sunday Schools.

To complete this well organized train of events, much wealth is indispensable; hence agents must be sent out to extoll this benevolent enterprize, take up collections, obtain donations, establish auxiliary branch societies, and employ every other means compatible with the end, which may best secure the two great agents--money and learning. In this way children are deprived of the freedom of thought, and in their tender infancy, are made to subserve these plans. The votaries of this scheme of operation form different societies to conduct the affairs of the different branches of the scheme; all must have money--all must have agents and auxiliaries--all must have a share of power; thus room is made for their preachers; some as agents for some one of these societies--some as domestic and some as foreign missionaries--some to conduct the different schools; and others to edit their journals, and all in their different ways, to enlist the youth in their enterprise, and obtain money and learning. The Pope subdued Africa by the plan of a monk, who sprinkled the children and when these came to maturity, they were Catholic subjects, and Africa was subdued. Now Sunday and Catechism schools are for the same end, and if all our children are taught to

read and believe tracts, and admire the benevolence of these societies, who with half an eye cannot see that the whole reins of government, of both Church and State, so far as human agency is concerned, will be in the hands and at the control of this great monopoly,—and like Africa, our freedom is gone like a pleasing dream. The complete and universal success of this scheme is what its friends are avowedly laboring for; it is what they are praying for, and it is what they are grasping wealth and learning for; and when they shall have accomplished their design, they expect the halcyon day to break with divine brightness and lock the jaws and palsey every arm and tongue that would refuse a tribute to this hallowed flame.

Now, sir, suppose the first of these plans should succeed, and all parties with their names should be forever lost in one great body, including all who now fill the ranks of the sects that now exist; and by this amalgamation, the millennium should be ushered in; in that case the Catholics and all reformers and protestants of every grade, with all their diversity of opinions, would be combined—all would have but one interest, and their numbers would be sufficient to control all nations. Why should we now hear the alarm sounded of Roman Catholic influence in America, and yet see without suspicion the exertions now making by many reformers, to identify themselves and their interest with the Catholic Church. Who cannot see what the glories of this millennium would consist of? And who does not know that Constatine established such an one long ago!! If either of these plans should succeed, our liberties are jeopardized, and the nation will be governed by the will of the church. If both should succeed, and this is most likely, for in the management of most of those societies, they are united already, and in doctrine and practice, they rapidly approximate each other; then wealth, learning, numbers, and

minds inclined in youth and well prepared to act in concert, our liberties are gone at their will. These plans may thus succeed, and just as sure as either, or both of them should, our liberties as a nation and as christians are lost. The Church of Christ have been a sect, as we have seen above, which have every where been spoken against, while Rome and all her daughters have been inventing and prosecuting these plans, and must suffer if ever they are consummated; and I believe that it is the spirit, and children of mystery Babylon that is now working, and many of these have crept in among the Baptists, and under the specious pretext of benevolence, many lovers of truth are spoiled through this disguise. As a christian, as a politician, as a citizen of the world, or a friend of the Baptists; I stand pledged to oppose with religious firmness, all these plans; and as many of my old friends have manifested a strong solicitude to know my views of these subjects, who live too remote to know by word of mouth, I send you this sheet for their perusal.

The plans above described are not in vogue among us. I have not seen or heard of a missionary, or a tract, or a Sunday School, or known of any exertions in favor of them in this place, since we have lived in Indiana. Our churches stand on the old predestinarian Baptist platform. We have, therefore, no division amongst us on these subjects, but stand prepared to oppose it if it should appear; and some of our churches have passed a resolution to prevent all hired agents or missionaries from preaching in their pulpits. The above is at your disposal; if it should appear on your pages as No. 1, I shall wish to follow this subject with some future numbers.

Yours,

(Elder) Wilson Thompson

Signs of the Times

March 25, 1836

Signs of the Times

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
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SPECIAL NOTICE

Again we wish to thank all the supporters of the *Signs of the Times* for their help in every way in the year 1980, as in other years.

Despite many difficulties and opposition from unexpected quarters, we feel our Lord graciously preserved the *Signs* for another year. We had several large legacies come to us, notice of which will appear shortly; many good articles were sent in; two new Associates were added; and in general, the help and encouragement from brethren from all areas has been more than we could expect. Thank you, one and all.

If we could plead your continued support for our family paper, we would especially point out four areas for your consideration.

1. Please send in your renewals on time. Our circulation office has to spend many, many hours each year sending out late notices and purging the subscription list, not to mention the expense involved. Please look at your mailing label and help us avoid this extra effort.

2. Continue sending in your Association and other meeting notices early. Many have done a splendid job in the past, and it is not to early now to send in those notices.

3. The Board of Trustees voted unanimously in November, 1980, to hold our current subscription price of \$5.00 for one year and \$9.00 for two years. This can only be done because of the gifts and contributions we have received along with renewals. If you can afford a contribution, please remember it will help keep the *Signs* going out while

costs continue to climb. Send in those new subscriptions, too.

4. More than all else, remember the *Signs* and its Staff when blessed to go before God's throne. Everyone involved in getting out the *Signs* does so with personal sacrifice. But what are our efforts when we consider that the only purpose of sending out the paper is to tell of the great sacrifice of the Son of God for His people. May His Name ever be adored.

We would mention in parting our solemn feeling of submission to the wise purpose of our God in removing our beloved Elder E. J. Lambert from our midst. The Lord gave; He took away.

The Editors

SELECTED

FRUITS OF THE FURNACE

Dear Brother,--Your last came duly to hand, and its contents gave me much pain. You are now, I perceive, in the furnace of affliction. Perhaps the heaviest temporal affliction is that of the body, and of which you complain. I am, as you well know, no stranger to this trying dispensation, and am, therefore, the better able to sympathize with you. This is a path in which it has been my lot to travel for some years past, and a thorny path I have found it to be; and though I would not swell my sorrows, yet the Lord only knows what I have undergone. But, though a rough way, I have sometimes seen it to be a right way, that leads to a city of habitation.

You complain, too, of sore soul trouble on account of the circumstances in which God has seen fit to place you; of a rebellious spirit; and of murmurings and fretfulness against the dealings of the Lord, and you contrast your own impatience in trouble with the patient endurance of Christ Jesus under the most extreme suffering, that God the Father might be glorified. O what poor, what base returns we make for so much

love bestowed upon us, for so much mercy manifested to us! It is, however, a mercy to see that "afflictions do not spring out of the dust;" that God doth not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men, and that there is a "needs be" for them. O how sweet it is to be enabled to see by faith that the sorrows, griefs, and perplexities which may attend us in our pilgrimage

"To Canaan's fair and happy land,"

are among those things that "work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose". (Rom. 8:28) I sometimes enter a little into the blessedness of the consideration that "our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory", (II Cor. 4:17) "if so be that we suffer with him, (Jesus) that we may be also glorified together". (Rom. 8:17) When the Spirit of the living God is pleased to pour a little prayer into my soul, I beg of the dear Lord not only for a sweet acquiescence in all his dealings with me, but also, being ashamed of my rebellion and unbelief, that I may be enabled to approve of the same. Sometimes, when borne down with sorrow and weariness of body, I am ready to exclaim, "What should I do if I had no Jesus for my support, no God to whom I could tell my sorrows, no throne of grace to supplicate, and no soul-cheering prospect of endless rest in that blissful place where Jesus dwells? That dear place above the starry skies, into which unnumbered millions of happy blood-washed spirits have entered who were once poor sinners like myself; who, when in the body, were afflicted, tempest-tossed, and travelled in a path of tribulation, as followers of the once poor, lowly, suffering, but now exalted, princely, and immortally-glorious Jesus. They have received a hearty welcome home! They now occupy the mansion prepared for them! They have experienced a blessed transition into a

solemn eternity, and are swallowed up in that profound abyss of love which no eye can fathom! O the amazing blessedness of having a sweet welcome home to the bosom of Jesus Christ, and a dear embrace in the everlasting arms of a faithful, covenant-keeping, and eternal God! They now sing in holy, lofty, solemn, and adoring strains of the omnipotent deeds of Christ, their Captain; of the matchless majesty of Almighty grace; and of the eternal efficacy of the blood of sprinkling! They worship their God, 'saying, Amen! blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, be unto our God for ever and ever! Amen.' (Rev. 7:12) They have an everlasting, beatific sight of the blazing glory of God the Father; they gaze with unspeakable rapture on the regal grandeur of Christ the Son; while the ever-blessed Spirit, God the Holy Ghost, is loved and adored as one with the Father and the Son, co-equal and co-eternal! 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!' (Rev. 7:14)

But to return. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings, and waded through sorrows and blood to the throne which he now fills in glory. So, also, there is a measure of suffering for the church, which is his body, to "fill up", or experience. It would appear exceedingly strange for the head to be crowned with thorns, and the feet to stand upon roses. To be vitally united to Christ, to become part of his bones, of his flesh, and of his blood, is to be unspeakably blessed. But this union cannot subsist without "fellowship of his sufferings: in a greater or less degree; hence, therefore, we suffer with him and rejoice with him, and it is sweet to be coming "up from the wilderness leaning upon the Beloved". (Song 8:5) Dear Hart sings very sweetly in the following lines:

"A faithful Friend of grief partakes
But union can be none
Between a heart of melting wax,
And hearts as hard as stone."

Whatever sufferings Jesus endured in the world, in the garden of Gethsemane or on Mount Calvary, whether from men, from devils, or from God, were wholly and solely from the church; for as many as He in the councils of eternity became surety for. "He suffered, just for the unjust, to bring us to God". He drank the cup of trembling, dregs, and damnation, that we might "feast on fat things", partake of living waters, and "take the cup of salvation." He

".....toil'd for our ease,
and for our safety bled"

O to have a personal interest in his expiatory death, precious blood-shedding and absolute redemption! O may God sanctify his dealings to our souls, and give us such a measure of grace as shall enable us to remain passive in his hands, comply with his will, and do and suffer all his good pleasure!

Afflictions are not joyous, but grievous, to our flesh and blood. We all love ease; and I have often felt, when sharply tried, as if I could sacrifice every honest principle to possess ease. The day of adversity and suffering is a solemn time. "I will (saith God) bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." (Zech. 13:9) I have sometimes trembled at these words, and have shrunk from the heavy trials here implied; and when in the furnace, and to my own views and feelings about to be consumed; when my life was almost insupportable, I have had such hard thoughts of God, and have felt so brimful of enmity, rebellion, and desperation, that I am astonished at the patience and long-suffering of God. No lost soul that now groans in hell more

deserves such a fate than I! Frequently have I murmured, "Lord, I cannot bear this hot furnace; have mercy on me, O God! have pity on me; remember I am but dust! Give me ease or cut me off; my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life! Hast thou given me grace and faith only to try me? Why am I dealt with so severely, while others tread a smoother path? 'Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Turn thou me and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God.'" (Jer. 31:18) Blessed be God, he hath not left me here, but hath mercifully intermixed his comforts with my sorrows; hath held up my head above the raging billows and swelling waves of tribulation, and hath supported my poor sinking soul with his grace. My poor parched heart hath he moistened and refreshed with a distilling of spiritual rain and dew. He hath shed abroad his all-conquering, sin-subduing love in my heaving breast; and while I have adored his sovereignty, I have triumphed in his mercy, and been brought by a sweet sense of his goodness to adoring wonder and holy admiration, deep abasement and solemn prostration of spirit. I have sometimes said, "Welcome afflictions, welcome sorrows, welcome death; 'for this God is my God for ever and ever, and he will be my guide even unto death.'" Thus have I experienced a sweetness in affliction; and when, by faith, I am enabled to see that my own good and the glory of God are inseparable my soul thus pours itself out in prayer: "Lord, give me patience; thou art the God of patience, I have none without thou art pleased to give it me. O bless me with humility, and with an abiding sense of thy amazing mercies to me, the chief of sinners; and since thou hast pardoned all my sins, and art become my salvation, may I be well content to do and suffer the good pleasure of thy solemn Majesty!"

Sometimes, when reflecting upon the penal sufferings of Jesus, and

contrasting the unspeakable difference between my sorrows and the sorrows, groans, and throes, burning agonies, and horrors of the poor suffering Saviour, I am ashamed of myself that a murmur should ever escape my lips. An eternity of hopeless misery must I have endured in hell but for Jesus Christ, who bore the punishment I deserved.

A further view of these things will humble us before God, and make us walk humbly with God. O how sweet to be led to see that from aforesaid God blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Jesus Christ! There is indeed, an everlasting solemnity in the cross of Christ. The immutable counsels and glorious designs of God hinge (if I may so express myself) upon the doing and the dying of God's incarnate Son. If I boast at all, let it be in the cross of Christ. If I glory at all, let it be in God; that I know something of him as a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, through the blood of Christ my Lord, to whom be glory in the church. Amen.

Yours affectionately,

P. R.

London, Oct. 7, 1842

Kalamazoo, Mich.

Dear Elder Spangler:

I am writing to you because my Mother always wrote to you. The *Signs of the Times* printed an article written by my Mother, Mary M. Pearson, in the April issue of 1975.

As you can tell by the enclosed letter, my Mother has passed away. I'm sorry I am so late with the notice. I went away after the Lord called her home. She was my Mother, Sister in the church, and a wonderful friend. She was a faithful soldier of the Cross and she fought a good fight. Her Lord was always first and foremost in her life. She had been blessed by God to the enlightenment of the Scriptures.

Enclosed is an Obituary written by

the church my Mother was a member of when she passed away. If you care to use it or re-write it in anyway, feel free to do so.

Also, do you want to change the name plate to my name, Anne M. Pearson, same address, or leave it in my Mother's name. I'll let you make the decision. I want to continue getting the *Signs of the Times*; what a wonderful church magazine. It is so enlightening and very rich reading.

Please find enclosed a check for \$25.00; \$9.00 to be used to renew the subscription which expires in January, 1982, and the balance to be used for a contribution.

I pray the Lord will continue to bless you and yours.

Marantha,
Anne M. Pearson

(See Obituary in this issue).

Virginia

Dear Editors,

Enclosed you will find a check to pay for two years subscription to the *Signs*. I usually do this at the Pigg River Association. Sorry I overlooked it this time. Thank you so much for continuing to send the *Signs* after the expiration date. Use the balance of this check in any way you see fit.

I surely don't want to miss any issues of this great magazine. This paper means nothing, or less than nothing, to the world or the unbeliever, but it is so sweet and precious to the believer. I truly believe it contains spiritual food for the poor in spirit, but nothing for the wise and prudent. I can say with confidence that I believe the doctrine set forth in the *Signs*, for unless I am terribly mistaken, I have been shown in no uncertain manner that the doctrine is true, and if so and I am right, I can only say, "Thank you, Father, for it seemeth good in Thy sight". For I most surely ridiculed, talked against, and made fun of this doctrine that I now believe, I trust

in and have been made to love.

How strange it is that the world thinks predestination is so terrible and unfair but to a believer, a plant that has been planted by the Heavenly Father, blessed to see the Truth, it is the sweetest doctrine in the world. I don't mean to write these things as if you don't know them, but more to express my feeling and stand up for what I believe is the doctrine of a Sovereign God; One who does all things after the council of His own will and such words as these that the world uses, "if you will let Him", has no place in the method of His doing things. They don't fit or describe the God in whom I believe. I believe He has the power to make a once mighty man like Nebuchadnezzar, the self righteous man like Saul of Tarasus, or even a low worm like myself, not only to see and believe, but willing, yes willing, to say even, "What will thou have me to do, Lord?"

If I have ever said, done, or though a good thing in all my life, I have nothing to boast of, but only to say, "Thank thee, Blessed Lord".

What a poor weak, sinful thing a man is. I believe at one time I was given to know the meaning of the scripture where it says, "Pray without ceasing". Then at other times I have no feeling for prayer and can't seem to even make the attempt. "Oh! foolish man that Thou art mindful of him".

Just think! The scripture says, "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort...". Try telling the world you can be comforted with a rod. What would they say or think? But Oh, how sweet the deliverance is.

I meant only to renew my subscription to the *Signs*. I didn't mean to bother you with so much. Forgive the mess, mistakes, etc. I hope I have not offended anyone by writing anything contrary to the true doctrine of salvation by Grace. For I believe that all who sing in the sweet, sunny banks of that celestial city

will go there solely by the grace of a Sovereign God and not by any deed that they have done or left undone.

May it please God to bless, guide, and keep you all in such a way that the *Signs* can keep coming to the homes of those to whom it means so much.

I am, I hope, a brother in Christ,
Frank Hunt

AT THE APPOINTED TIME

I believe that all things come to pass exactly at the time appointed of God. The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand. (Isa. 14:15). Did God fail to think of anything? If so, then He would not be a perfect God, and surely He would not be the God in whom I hope to trust. Solomon says, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." And God declared the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Also, "yea, I have spoken it, I will also do it." (Isa. 46:9-10).

God appeared unto Abraham and promised him an heir. Sarah laughed within herself, but the Lord replied, "Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." (Gen. 18:14). Did God fail to return at the appointed time? or did Abraham fail to receive the promise of God? "And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he promised. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the time set of which God had spoken to him." (Gen. 21:1-3). God also told Abram that his seed would be servants in a strange land and would be afflicted by the people of the land 400 years. Then God raised up Moses and at the appointed time sent him to deliver the children of Israel, the seed of

Abraham, after the 400 years of bondage.

In the seventh chapter of Job we find: "Is there not an appointed time to man upon the earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling? As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as the hireling looketh for the reward of his work: so am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me." Also Job 14:14, "If a man dies, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." Surely if Job's days and wearisome nights were appointed to him, are not ours also appointed to us? Yes, we will live out all our appointed time, suffer all things appointed to us; and also rejoicing, if we believe in him, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. (I Peter 1:8).

Jesus stood as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8) and when the fullness of the time (appointed time) was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Gal. 4:4-5). Yes, there was a time appointed that Christ should become incarnate, suffer, and die on the cross for the children chosen in him before the foundation of the world. Though the people sought many times to kill him before the appointed time, they could not because his time was not yet come. Jesus said, "My time is not yet come." (John 7:6). And at another time, "My time is at hand." (Matt. 26:18). But at the appointed time, "both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." (Acts 4:27-28). Yes, our blessed Savior was slain at the appointed time according to the determinate counsel of God.

There is a time and purpose for everyone born into this world: a time to be born, a time to die, and a time to fulfill

every purpose appointed to us; and when it pleases God to reveal His Son in one who has everlasting life then is that one born again; the time of the spiritual birth being just as certain as the time of the natural birth, and is in no way controlled by man, as is preached in most pulpits today. For this birth is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12). And, "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever. Nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God doeth it, that men should fear before him." And, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

The word predestination is not found in the holy scriptures, and predestinate and predestinated are found only four times, but it gives me great comfort in times of affliction and stress to know that God has predestinated all things, as the scriptures above clearly indicate to me. Jesus told his disciples, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for these things must come to pass." Wars are terrible and fearful things, but they must come in their seasons and God most certainly has a purpose in them. However, one is greatly comforted when he is made to realize that all things, including wars, are in complete control by our all powerful, all knowing God; and that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Not all things are good, neither are all things good to us, all things work together for our good.

Beloved Brethern and Sisters, cast a mantle of charity over my mistakes and remember me when at the throne of grace.

Clifford Wilbanks

Fremont, N.C.

Dear Elders of the Signs,

I am sorry to be late renewing my subscription of the *Signs of the Times*.

I am enclosing a check to renew it for one year.

May our Lord and Saviour bless each of you Editors to continue to set forth the doctrine of truth as it is set forth in the scriptures.

Use the rest of the check for the distribution of the *Signs of The Times* to others.

I am a little sister in hope of eternal life, if one at all.

Mrs. Jilia P. Sauls

SELECTED

THE HILL MIZAR

Messrs. Editors,—It is now some years since it pleased God (after a long struggle in soul feeling, wherein sin and presumption, fear and self-pity, enmity to God, desire of annihilation, unbelief, fear of death and wrath, a terror of God's holiness, and now and then a longing for pardon and reconciliation, with other strange and paradoxical changes had alternately worked) to favour me with his presence whilst I was in a solitary place contemplating the glories of his person as the Saviour of the worst of sinners, longing to know him as mine, and sighing for the inward testimony of the Spirit. I felt, in a measure, that softness which is described by Hart, and an indescribable meekness, humility, and subjection before God come over me. I also felt much contrition, mingled with self-abhorrence, and a wonderful sense of the condescending compassion of Jesus to one so contrary to him. I felt that something great was at hand, and was constrained to ask and receive, that is, by faith. At that moment I perceived an open door, and on going in I saw there was no cloud before the throne of God. On kneeling before him I suddenly found that my burden was gone, and felt such an earnestness, fervour, and confidence as I never had before experienced. I could not help believing. My prayers were turned to praises, and my heart seemed ready to burst. I had no portion

of scripture applied, but the God of the scripture was in my heart; and whilst the mercy and lovingkindness of a dying Redeemer were pouring in, I could not pour out my thankfulness fast enough. I rose from my knees, my eyes streaming with tears, and, finding myself alone with Jesus, felt that I, then could have joyfully departed this life. In a few minutes after I was filled with dread that he would soon depart, and tried hard to detain him, but he left me to wonder and adore him as all my salvation. This is my hill Mizar, which the Lord still keeps in my mind, and though Satan has disputed me out of many gleams and rays of warmth and life from the Sun of righteousness, I have felt that he cannot entirely wrest it from me. Many changes have I gone through. Sometimes fervid fits seize me, but they are often followed by coldness and deadness; as other times I am hoping and trusting, doubting and fearing. But this I have often found, and to the Lord's praise be it said, that the sufferings of Christ, whenever spoken of with feeling, always find an avenue to my heart. I feel a love to the speaker, and, when meditating thereon, long to embrace that truth. I would fain love that intense loving One, while admiring, with a mixture of tears of love, grief, and feeling desires, ardent desires, fixing on him who, I hope, loved me and died for me. O how I again long to feel a measure of that unction stealing over my soul, and, taking me away from self and sin, enabling me once more to partake of unspeakable peace and joy! I solemnly declare that I do believe no person has a right notion of what peace and joy mean until they experience this. But how the world allures; how the heart conceives and brings forth thoughts and feelings, all of which tend to dismay and terrify the soul, and if the world cannot understand what true peace and joy mean, I am sure they cannot know what shame and grief are, how the spirits

droop, or how the head hangs. O how I have hated myself when death, in the feelings, the sad fruit of sin in the heart, enhanced my memory, recalling the former tenderness, peace, and love felt in secret with an agonizing Saviour, and then to feel careless, thoughtless, and indifferent. I go and hear sound preaching, nothing to offend, perhaps, but I often neither feel contrition nor humility at his feet, for all is winter in my soul. Who can abide his coldness? In the chequered path that I sometimes travel, mistrust and unbelief make me tremble at my anticipated end. When a ray of light, with a little warmth, like a winter sunbeam, causes some hope to spring up, thereby enabling me to read the Bible or one of Hart's hymns, I feel a thankfulness to God in my heart. But yet, after all, I am not satisfied with my state. I want to be more decided; I want to be more dead to the world; I want to feel more hatred to sin, more love to the brethren, more humility in the heart. I want accomplished in me an ability to make a surrender of soul and body into the hands of Christ, even as Peter did. This have I longed for ever since I heard Mr. ----, a little time ago, dwell upon that subject. I was tempted to a legal working to obtain it, but all this turned out to be nothing but "vanity and vexation of spirit." I want to be more dependent on, and more earnest for the sovereign operations of the Holy Spirit, who alone can work this in me, or anything else that is pleasing in the sight of God. He alone can bring anything profitably to my soul concerning Jesus Christ, and him crucified, to whom, with the Father and the Son, be all the praise.

G. C.

Jan. 17, 1843

FROM ALABAMA

Carbon Hill, Alabama
Dear Editors of The *Signs of the Times*,

We are late, and I am sorry about it. We have had so much sickness and I am so crippled that I suppose my mind is getting weak and forgetful. Please pardon our neglectfulness in getting this in sooner.

We are 85 and 83 years old. My husband is only two years older, but he is getting feeble, too, in mind and body. We do look forward each month for our *Signs of the Times*. We are not able to attend Church, so this makes our *Signs* mean more to us. All the articles are so wonderful and good. We feel this world has become so wicked that our Lord could come at any time. All we have time for is being ready to meet Him when He comes.

We think of all our good ministers who have passed on and several of whom we know are not well at all. This makes us feel sad, yet we know whose hand we are in, and know we won't leave this world until our time comes and God is ready to call us.

Please pray for us, and we pray if it is God's will to spare all you Editors, give you health and strength to continue the *Signs of the Times*. We love all of God's people wherever they are.

We feel this is written in love,
James C. and Lillian Scott

THE UNCHANGEABLENESS AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD

The unchangeableness or immutability of God is a strange stab at the littleness, the contemptibleness, and naughtiness of free will, Fullerism, and all universal redemptionists. And I ask, what is this unchangeableness or immutability? It is the immutability of God. And who is God? The Being whose perfections are himself, and himself his perfections. Thus the perfections of God are searched into by any one in whom, through regeneration, dwells the Spirit of illumination.

When I think of those perfections of God, as, for instance, immutability, I

stand back, and tremble, and keep my distance, in reverence and godly fear at a Being possessed of such a tremendous quality as this of unchangeableness. "What" say I, "can it be, that I, -a worm, a creature of a day, a moth, and a shadow, -can ever worship such an amazing Being as one who, infinitely more stable than the mountains, cannot ever be rooted up or altered in the least of his purposes? Can it be that I can worship him?" Thus godly fear and every grace, with reverence and with admiration, take possession of his breast in whom is displayed, by the Spirit's power, this or any other admirable quality in God.

When I consider, also, that to this quality of unchangeableness in God, are added the tremendous perfections of eternity, infinity, self-existence, that he cannot be destroyed, that he never began and never ends, how, at times, the feelings of a sensible sinner tremble and quake!

When I consider, also, that to this unchangeableness are also added the strictest justice, the most rigid justice, the most unalterable justice, the eternal and infinite determination to "bring the wheel over the wicked", and "not to clear the guilty", no, not in the least degree; when I consider a Being armed with such formidable qualities, (formidable to such a guilty wretch as man,) I stand amazed before him! And, feeling my carnal mind enmity against him, I wonder not that the unregenerate priests, and rabble, and religious folks among the Jews, called out and roared out for Barabbas, a miscreant, rather than the God-Man. The beautiful attribute of hatred to sin, the power and determination to punish it, vexed the carnal professors of letter-godliness to distraction, the unchangeableness of God heightening it all, and the even-handed stroke of Infinite Justice blazing before their crooked goings-on. I say, need any one wonder that human nature roared out for Barabbas rather

than Christ, if, in the self-existent light of God in a natural conscience, they saw the unchangeable hatred of God against pride, the show of a mere outward tinsel religion, and his unconquerable power to punish it; when they saw the unchangeable liking to humility which Christ showed; when they saw his unchangeable batterings against the love of the world, against ambition, against laying up money, the modes of life, the wisdom of man, and all the painted drapery of human proceedings?

I declare, for my part, that I have "stood and trembled" when I have thought of even this one attribute, the unchangeableness of this Almighty Being. What! will he not alter? And has he power to execute his purposes too? O the stun that it gives to the little, the great, the serpentine and twisted self-importance of such a wretch as myself! And I find that the patriarch Job shared with me in this; for he felt himself to be a wretch, or else he would never have indulged in that supernatural apostrophe, "I abhor myself". I say that the patriarch Job shared in this, to be brought to a mighty deep, when, in God's regenerating light, he was led to contemplate God's immutability. "For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me; therefore am I troubled at his presence. When I consider, I am afraid of him. (Job 23:14, 15)

When I consider, again, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose obedience and blood-shedding I stand acquitted and gloriously righteous before God, in which Lord Jesus Christ all the perfections of the Deity centre, harmonize, and shine in behalf of the redeemed; when I think of him, and think of myself, how my heart sinks within me! He steadfast to his purpose, and I timid as a fly. When I think of the difference between him and my fellow-creatures,--he God as well as man, and taking on himself the form of a servant, and being a penniless carpenter; (for

poor women had to minister to his wants;) when I think of him a servant, though he was Lord of all, and contrast this with the blazing haughtiness of man; he a servant, and man galloping with the swiftness of a racer after respectability; he having no where to lay his head, and man cheated with the whim of a fine house; he called "a fellow" by the religious, and swarms of self-made Christians glorying in an honourable name; he crucified, and they stretched on their beds of ease; he almost penniless, and they with their handsome incomes; he laid in wait for from the cradle by Herod, the slaughterer of innocents; hunted much through life by nominal professors, and stung by the cruel death of the cross; when I think of all his troubles internally, which none scarce but God know anything of; I say, when I thus consider Christ, in whom harmonized and centred, in behalf of the redeemed, all the perfections of Deity, and contrast him with man or self, how my soul bubbles up with unutterable feelings, and sees the world to be a wilderness, and myself carnally and naturally a fiend! O God! how unsearchable are thy thoughts! how high thy glories swell!

And I would observe that the unchangeableness of God stops in me the mouth of free-will prayer; it shows me that God has a will; it makes me wait for indited prayer; it make me look to the spirit to teach me to pray; it makes me see that all prayer not according to the will of God is wildfire; it makes me feel that I know not what to pray for; and it makes my ransomed soul (in which the Spirit of supplication dwells) look to the Holy Spirit alone, to teach me how to pray.

O blessed and soul-enriching contemplations! My soul as a weaned child waits upon God. I sun myself in the blaze of his unalterable and countless perfections. It makes me feel him to be the habitation also of all amiableness,

as well as of all power; for what is more amiable than perfect godness, and what more beautiful than beauty itself? Gladness, goodness, and beauty are in God's tabernacle. (Joel 1:16; Ps. 96:6) I trust that the furnace of affliction will be sanctified to cleanse my misty eyesight to see more of these things. I trust that I may be brought to say, "My soul fainteth for the living God", the self-existent habitation of all his many excellencies. May I be able even to say, with one of old, "I opened my mouth and panted" for the very fervent desire that I have towards God's ways "at all times".

I. K.

Abingdon
The Gospel Standard
March, 1843

Monday Night 6-2-80

Dear Sister Catherine:

I washed this p.m. and did some other work, therefore I am tired. However I feel impressed to write you a few lines to say, "If you still have the letter I wrote you that you asked for my permission to send for publication in the *Signs*, provided the Editor considers it worthy of space, you may send it". Since you wrote me that several had mentioned enjoying reading the one that was published. I have given it more consideration.

Should it please God to enable me to write something that would be of comfort to some of His children I should feel thankful. I fully realize it must be of Him otherwise it would be as sounding brass and tinkling symbol, so to speak.

As a matter of fact, I recall very little the letter contained. I do remember, or think I am right, my subject was faith.

Again, I want to thank you for the good letter and Mother's Day card and note.

I am so unworthy of the consideration you give me.

Just an attempt to hint at the condition I was in, at Laurel Creek the

fourth Sunday. I say hint because that is all that I can do. Words are inadequate to express my condition. I left home so happy to get started over there, and came home in such despair and humiliation. What a dolt I was. How doltish and offensive I acted. I couldn't sing. I couldn't hear. No doubt the Brethren preached well; however it was not for me. I was completely cut off. I, told myself as we were driving a short distance from the church, "I wish I could die".

Sister Catherine, I know this was good for me. We must have some bitter along with the sweet. It takes so much to keep me at His feet. O! that He would lay me low and keep me there.

P.S.

Hope you will forbear my weakness.

Hope I may see you. It means a lot to see and hear from you.

It is late bed time. I must go to bed. Remember me when at a throne of grace.

Love and best wishes,
Gay

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MINUTES OF PRESBYTERY SOUTH ARKANSAS

Pursuant to a request sent out by Antioch Church, Ouachita County, Arkansas, to meet on November 23, 1980 for the purpose of the ordination of Brother Newton Butler to the office of Deacon of Antioch Primitive Baptist Church, the following Elders and Deacons met and organized themselves into a Presbytery:

Elders

J. C. Townley
George W. Jones
David E. Turner
Graydon Smith

Deacons

Frank Pilgreen
Fred B. Murphy

The Presbytery organized itself by electing Elder Townley moderator and Brother Fred Murphy as clerk. Brother Aubrey Higgs was appointed spokesman for the church, who then presented Bro. Butler to the Presbytery.

After due examination of said Brother as to deportment, qualifications, and the state of God's gift to them as a deacon to the satisfaction of the Presbytery, the Presbytery proceeded to ordain him to the office of Deacon as follows;

The Presbytery selected Elder Townley to word the opening prayer and Elder Jones to deliver the charge. Whereupon the Presbytery then proceeded with the ordination by the laying on of hands of the Presbytery, and with prayer by Elder Turner and then the charge delivered by Elder

Jones.

The members of the Presbytery commended Deacon Butler to all orderly orthodox Primitive Baptists of the same Faith and Order as being sound in doctrine, careful in deportment, humble in the display of God's gift of the office of Deacon.

The right hand of fellowship was given him and his companion by the members of the Presbytery, Antioch Church, and brethren of sister churches, and he was delivered back to the church as a duly ordained deacon by the presbytery and received by the church.

Minutes of the proceedings were read and approved. The Presbytery was adjourned in order with prayer by Elder Smith.

J. C. Townley (Moderator)
Fred B. Murphy (Clerk)

FROM NEW MEXICO

Mountainair, N.M.

Dear Brother,

I am enclosing my subscription for another year. I am a little late, as my subscription expired in October. I am sorry for this, but it seems it couldn't be helped.

We always try to pass along our paper for others to read who are interested, and they return it afterwards. That way maybe we can help someone else to read the Truth.

We appreciate all the efforts that go into the publishing of the *Signs*, as it is quite an undertaking. Please keep it coming.

Yours in hope,
Mr. & Mrs. R. R. Wolf

EDITORIAL

"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice yielded up the ghost and behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom: And the earth did quake and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose

and come out of the graves after his resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared unto many.” (Matt. 27:50-53)

This particular passage of scripture gives to us the most descriptive account of the actual death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and of the very significant events which accompanied this most outstanding occasion. This appointment for Jesus was made before time began and all events preceding it were pointing forward to it and since have been reflective of what was actually accomplished at this center stage of the world and the plan involving God's children in all ages of time. It is the fulfillment of prophecy of the holy men of old as they were moved by the Spirit of God to tell of the things that were to come and the plan of salvation to be revealed in that day. It is the substance of things hoped for by the saints in all ages of time, those that look for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. This was the most monumental event that had occurred since the beginning of time and it was so designated by the solemn and awesome display of power and majesty of the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Jesus had prayed to God, "Father the hour is now come. Glorify thy son that thy son may also glorify thee." What a glorious and magnificent manner in which God the Father acknowledged His beloved Son and accepted the sacrifice for the sin of all the elect family, heirs of His sovereign grace and mercy. It was well pleasing unto God and fulfilled to a jot and a tittle the just demands of a righteous God as set forth in His holy law.

The events which occurred at this precise moment in time were not just random happenings without any rhyme or reason. They were all of special significance and comfort to all who have been made to trust in the sovereign mercy of an all wise, all powerful God of purpose; a God who speaks and it is

done; commands and it stands fast; who is of one mind and purpose; who changes not and whose good pleasure it is to give unto His children His kingdom and all the joyful blessings of it. This is the God who ordered all of the events on this occasion and manifested them in such a way and manner as to comfort them and to strengthen their faith in the prophecies concerning Christ and to give them blessed assurance of the certainty of the things which are promised and yet to be fulfilled. Things which are for their good and are for the sake of all who walk by faith in God and not by natural sight or understanding. Those who trust in Him who hath called them out of nature's darkness into His marvelous light.

Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice yielded up the ghost. Jesus, the Man, forsaken for a short moment of time, for the suffering of death, manifests the weakness of the flesh by crying out in pain. He must suffer the agony of the cruel death on the cross and this He could not have done as God-man. He must be like His brethren to die, and therefore make the sacrifice for all of the children of God who are under the law of sin and death. They were all under that law and could never be freed from it until a suitable ransom was paid and that could only be by the death of the only begotten of the Father. This was the fulfillment of prophecy by Isaiah, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him. He hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the travail of his soul: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities". This is beautiful and comforting to those who believe in the finished work of Christ to behold prophecy manifested unto them and accomplishing for them that which they realize they could not do themselves. They had sinned and fallen

short of the demands of the law and now Jesus enduring the agony of the cross willingly, despising the shame was forever perfected all that come unto God through Him. This is the only way that any will ever come to God. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me", and that forever settles that.

"The veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom", manifesting that it was the work of God, and not the efforts of man, which would have to be from bottom, where he is, to the top. The veil of the temple, in the law dispensation, was a barrier placed between the children of Israel and the holiest of holies so that they could not see to the end of those truths that were contained in the law. The Apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthians said, speaking of the Jews, "But their minds were blinded: for unto this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament: which veil was done away in Christ." This veil was done away manifestly at the precise time of Christ's death by its being rent from top to bottom, completely destroyed, no longer a barrier to separate His children from Him. The end of the law for righteousness had come and therefore they were no longer subject to the ordinances imposed on them until this time of reformation. The atonement had been made and the veil having been moved out of the way, the vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory had access to the true mercy seat, the throne of grace, each for themselves. "By a new and living way which Christ had consecrated for them thru the veil that is to say his flesh". (Heb. 10:20) They are now enabled, by the Spirit, to approach unto God and worship Him in Spirit and truth at the "altar where of they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle". (Heb. 13:10)

"And the earth did quake and the rocks rent", indicating the reaction of

the things of nature to this mighty force of their Creator that is at work in their midst. This typifies the reaction of the carnal man to the eternal truths of the Almighty God of the universe. They cannot understand, and in nature's darkness will never believe the truth because it is spiritually discerned. If not born again, they will never understand and yet they despise it just as the Jews hated Jesus without a cause. Just as the earth quaking and the rocks renting manifested the disturbance in nature, so do these basic truths disturb the man in nature and upsets their sense of security and imagined superiority over all that they survey. They are at peace in the natural earthly realm enjoying the comforts and pleasures that it provides the flesh and they want no part of this that is foreign to their way of life.

"And the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection and went into the city and appeared unto many". What a wonderful confirmation of the prophesies which had been declared by holy men of old as they were moved by the Spirit to declare this that was being made manifest on this occasion. Job said, "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself and not another: though my reins be consumed within me". He was given to see and declare this basic truth that has been the hope of the children of God in all ages of time. Abraham looked for a city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God, expressing a hope in this same truth. The coming forth from the graves after Christ was resurrected is the basis of the Apostle Paul's declaration of Christ being the firstfruits. This implies that there will be a latter fruit of which Christ's resurrection is the first. Jesus said in John 12:23, "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone: but if it

die it bringeth forth much fruit." And He was speaking of the hour in which the Son of Man would be glorified.

Again the Apostle Paul declared, I Cor. 15:20, "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits: afterward they that are Christ's at his coming". This is indicative of the truth that all that are Christ's ill be a part of that resurrection that will occur at the coming of Christ in all of His glory. This will be at a specific time when the dead in Christ shall arise and it is a great comfort to all who live in hope of being a part of that great event. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the air: And so shall we ever be with the Lord". Wherefore comfort one another with these words. Talk to your brethren about these wonderful and blessed truths that are so dear to our hearts and so strengthening to our hope as we run with patience this race that is set before us.

The saints who came out of the graves went into the Holy City and appeared unto many. In that day when all of the saints of God shall arise from the graves they, too, will go into the Holy City. They shall enter into the new Jerusalem which shall be their eternal dwelling place and there they shall appear amidst the saints from all ages of time around the Throne of God to sing His praises forever. They shall sing a new song that they have learned by their experiences in this life and the revelations of the Spirit that has enabled them to understand truth. Their song shall be, "Thou art worthy to take

the book, and open the seals thereof, for thou was slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation: And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on earth". There they shall dwell in His presence and eternally worship Him whose love and mercy alone has brought them to this place and whose banner over them is love. Oh, glorious thought. Oh, blessed hope. What a wonderful heritage for the weary wanderers in this low ground of sin and sorrows to meditate on as they press on to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

In Bonds of Love,
(Elder) Richard H. Campbell

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

TO WHOM IS THE GOSPEL PREACHED?

Many who are evidently children of God, believe that the gospel is preached to those dead in sin for the purpose of quickening them; that the Lord uses the ministry of the word as the ordinary means of bringing his people from death to life. I believe this to be an error, and, like all error, it tends to the discomfort of those among the living family of God who embrace it.

Throughout the Scriptures, living souls are designated as the subject of gospel address. "He hath annointed me to preach the gospel to the poor"; Luke 4:18. "The poor have the gospel preached to them"; Matt. 11:5. "Children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth the Lord, to you is the word of this salvation sent"; Acts 13:26. "Ho, every one that thirsteth"; Isa. 60:1. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"; Rom. 1:16. All these, the

poor, those who fear God, the thirsty, and the believer, are living characters. But when it is said that to such only is the gospel sent, then some will assume that we believe that the minister must be careful to select those whom he knows to be the elect, and speak only to them. The apostles, whom the Savior sent, "into all the world", that is, among Gentile nations as well as to the Jews, could not know the elect, until they were manifest by believing the gospel which they preached. They proclaimed the gospel, the glad tidings of salvation, wherever a door was opened in providence, to all that came within the sound of their voice; and so do all the ministers of Jesus Christ. But none hear it spiritually but those who have spiritual ears; none believe it but those who have faith to believe. Some say it is to be preached to those without faith. In a literal sense, this is true, but not in order to produce faith in them, but to separate from among them those who have faith. Paul tells of some unto whom the gospel was preached, who were not profited by it, because they had no faith; Heb. 4:2.

If one should be sent with a message from a king to all his subjects in a certain distant land, he would not have to inquire out those subjects before delivering it; for the message itself, proclaimed openly among all the people, would find out those in whose native language it was delivered, and thus distinguish them from among all the multitudes as the ones unto whom it was sent. So the gospel is a message of glad tidings, sent in the language of Canaan, and though proclaimed among all people, none hear and understand but those who have been born of God. Unto these he "has turned a pure language", and by hearing and believing that sweet message, they are manifest as those unto whom it was sent by the Great King. These are new creatures in Christ, unto all of whom the gospel is preached.

The Savior said to his apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel

to every creature". The expression, "every creature", is acknowledged by all to have a limited meaning. Unlimited, it would embrace the animal creation. But all must acknowledge that it is still further limited, for it could not include infants and those not literally capable of hearing and understanding. This shows that the preaching of the gospel is not necessary to eternal salvation, as some ignorantly imagine, for infants of days, removed from this world, sing in glory through Jesus Christ our Savior. But of those who are capable of hearing and understanding naturally, how very few have ever heard the literal sound of the gospel. If, then, we understand the Savior's command to the apostles to be that they should preach the gospel to every one of the race of Adam, who was capable of hearing and understanding the words, we must conclude that his command has not been obeyed, and that the will of God has not been done. But this can not be, for many scriptures declare that all of his will is done in heaven and on earth; that "whatsoever his soul desireth even that he doeth". Also, he declared that "The poor have the gospel preached to them". And an inspired apostle has said that this gospel of the kingdom was preached to every creature which is under heaven; Col. 1:23. It has been asserted that the expression, "every creature", as used by the apostle, does not mean the same as when used by the Savior. But to prove this assertion, the very point in controversy is assumed. It is said that the apostle could not have meant that the Savior's command was fulfilled, because the gospel had not then been preached very far from the Mediterranean Sea. But the apostle is authority for believing the gospel was preached to every creature which is under heaven in that age, and has been ever since, in full obedience to the Savior's command, which embraced every creature only in a spiritual sense, every one who is created in Jesus Christ.

These only have ears to hear, and the Savior said, "Let them hear". These only hunger and thirst after righteousness, and the Savior said, "They shall be filled". These only are poor in spirit and the Savior said, "Unto the poor the gospel is preached".

How often it is said that the preaching of the gospel is the means of quickening dead sinners. But it is not so said in the Bible. Our Savior said, "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whomsoever he will". And again, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing". And again, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live". "Yes", it is replied, "this is true, but the Spirit sends that life or quickening power through the preaching of the word; the dead hear the voice of the Son of God in the gospel, believe, and live". A little more thoughtful attention would cause them to reverse the order of those words, remembering that life must precede both hearing and believing. And in considering all the scriptures, which are presented to sustain the idea that the preaching is instrumental in bringing the dead to life, such as the command to teach all nations, and the apostles' obedience to that command, and the declaration that many hearing the preaching believed, we must bear in mind that none but the living can be taught, or can believe.

There are no instances recorded where eternal life is said to have been communicated through the preaching of the gospel. But there are instances where it is known to have been possessed by those who had not heard the preaching by human lips, as the eunuch, the jailor, Saul of Tarsus, and Cornelius with all his house; and in the case of Lydia the power of God is expressly declared as preparing her to attend the things spoken, while Paul was preaching. In my mind, this is

expressly to teach that the preaching, and the preparation to hear and receive the preaching, are to be considered as distinct from each other. It was not said that the Lord opened Lydia's heart through Paul's preaching. I must, therefore, believe that not only in some, but in all cases, spiritual life is communicated before there is power to hear and believe, instead of being given through and by the hearing. The life must precede the hearing, though it be but for an instant.

It is very often the case that condemnation on account of sin is first felt, when not under the sound of preaching, and often by those that never heard the truth preached. Also deliverance from that condemnation is experienced most generally, perhaps, when the poor soul is in secret, trying to cry and beg for mercy. Now, the preaching of the gospel can be heard and understood by that one. If he has set under the sound of it before, it now has a new sound. It tells what he has felt. He believes because he has the witness in his own heart to prove the truth of what the preacher says. It is to him the power of God unto salvation, because that power has been experienced within him. "This gospel of the kingdom", the Savior said, "must be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come"; Matt. 24:14. This was done before the apostles had fully finished their work in declaring the end of that dispensation, and establishing the gospel church in all its order in obedience to the command of Christ. Must be preached, not to quicken dead sinners, but for a witness, manifesting those unto whom the dear Savior has communicated eternal life and the glad tidings of salvation. The preacher can tell no one any thing which has not already been taught him by that anointing, which he has received of Jesus, and which teaches of all things: I John 2:27. And it is only concerning the work of God's

grace and his power unto salvation, experienced in the heart, that any one is fed with knowledge and understanding by the pastors after God's own heart, whom he sends unto them. It is supposed by some, that "Feed my sheep", is not the limit of the Savior's command to the apostles, and of the apostles directions to ministers; that when Paul said to Timothy, "Preach the word", he opened up a larger field of labor, that when he said to the elders of Ephesus, "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood". But did the apostles or ministers ever preach any thing in obedience to his command but the truth as it is in Jesus? And is not every part of that truth always the food which is to be ministered to the sheep and lambs, to the church of God? Did any one but the sheep ever profit by the preaching of the gospel? Then it must be acknowledged that neither apostle nor prophet can go beyond the command given to Peter, "Feed my lambs".

To speak of the Lord using means and instrumentalities to bring his people from death to life, appears to me derogatory to his majesty and power. It seems like limiting the Holy One of Israel. Although many who believe this would not limit him, but wish to honor his name. If such a thing were expressly declared in the Scriptures that would settle it as the truth, but since it is not, it is always an inference. In defending the doctrine of means, one says, "The tool of the mechanic will of itself never accomplish any thing, yet in all the mechanic's purposes the tool and its uses are included". And with this he illustrates how he supposes the gospel ministry has been appointed by God as instruments to be used in severing the stones from the rocks, and in building up the church. But the mechanic is dependent upon the tool. Is the Lord dependent upon the ministry to do that work? The very thought is limiting him. I know it is said that he has ordained the

means with the end. But when the Bible talks that way, I will receive it. He has ordained everything, in a certain absolute sense. Nothing transpires but is in accordance with his eternal purpose. He has chosen to feed his people by the hand of poor sinners saved by grace, but he does not speak of them as means and instrumentalities. This is the inference of men, and is calculated to make them appear of some importance. And generally the means are said to be in men's hands, as though the Lord worked by means, but men used the means. He works in and through them by his controlling and directing Spirit, causing them to preach in such a way that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of man; but not to give life through them or through their preaching.

The same author just alluded to, speaks of the ram's horns as the means by which the walls of Jericho fell down, and implies that the preaching of the gospel is thus represented as the means of quickening dead sinners. But Paul, in presenting the truth concerning this subject, does not even allude to the blowing of the ram's horns, but says, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days". One might reply that faith enabled them to use the means. Then we must refer to some of the other examples which the apostle gives in the same connection of the character and power of faith to see if this is to be so understood. "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death". "By faith women received their dead raised to life". Were any means used here? Were the empty pitchers, and lamps, and trumpets in the hands of Gideon's little army means by which the Midianites were overthrown, or were they dispersed by the sword of the Lord and of Gideon? the word of God, which by faith the little company believed. In all these instances the apostle is showing examples of faith as the

substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen. Faith is the knowledge of God's will and purpose which he gives to his people according to his own pleasure, causing them to desire and pray for the very things he has foreordained for them, and to be absolutely assured of them, so that they will move on in obedience to his commands against impassible barriers, against all the dictates of worldly wisdom, not to effect the fulfillment of his purposes, but to display the power of that faith of which he is the author and finisher, by holding the pitchers and lamps, compassing the walls, blowing the ram's horns, and even sounding the trumpet of victory before the enemy knows of defeat. Joshua did not say, "Shout, that the Lord may give you the city"; but, "Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city"; and after that the walls fell down. The Lord threw them down without the aid of the ram's horns. He overthrew the armies of the aliens. He raised the dead to life, and translated Enoch that he should not see death. And he gave his people faith as the substance and evidence of these things before they were seen, and by that faith made them overcome the world. They were witnesses of his work. And so are all the Lord's servants witnesses of his work. He sent Paul as a witness both of the things he had seen, and of those things in which he would appear unto him; Act. 26:16. If any insist that the Lord Jesus opened the eyes of the heathen, and turned them from darkness to light through the preaching of Paul, they must still remember that only the living are blind. That the Pharisees, our Savior said, were not blind in the sense that those were whose eyes he came to open. Those who experience a hope are often left long in the bondage of error and delusion, before the Lord sends the truth home to them, opening their eyes to see it as in accordance with what they have experienced. So when they hear the truth preached, and the Lord mani-

fest its power to them as living souls, their eyes are opened to see it, they believe it, they are turned from the darkness of error to the light of it, and as sheep they feed upon it.

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures"; James 1:18. This is regarded by some as a declaration that the preaching of the word quickened those alluded to. But the apostle James includes himself with those of whom he speaks. What he says of them was true in his case. But we know he was not made alive by means of preaching, for the Savior called him by his own voice, saying, "Follow me". That same voice is heard by all his sheep. By him as the word they are begotten and born; for Peter says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever". He does not say they are born again by the preaching of the gospel, but he says that this word of God by which they are born again, and which endures forever, is the word which by the gospel is preached unto them;" I Peter 1:23-25. That word is Jesus, whose name in salvation is called the Word of God. "This is the word which was in the beginning with God, and which was God, and which was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"; John 1. The gospel is not this word, but is glad tidings of it. This word by the gospel is preached unto the saints who have felt the glorious power thereof, as the apostle John says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that

your fellowship may be with us"; I John 1:1-3. Here is the word of truth, the word of life, the word of God, the eternal life, by which the saints are all begotten and born again. This is the word of God by which hearing and faith come. If that word of God be not in the heart, there can be no power to hear, nor can the faith or truth of the gospel be received. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who hath believed our report". They all heard literally, for "their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world". But only those who had been begotten by the word of truth could hear and understand"; Rom. 10:15-20.

The gospel stands contrasted with the law. A little consideration of this point will show that the gospel can not be to the dead, but to the living. The Lord's people must first know the law in its condemning power before they can receive the gospel, the glad tidings of salvation. But none can know himself to be a lost sinner, justly condemned by the holy law of God, until he has been made alive by the quickening Spirit of God. Only by the light of divine life can one see himself dead in trespasses and sin. Paul was alive spiritually, or the coming of the commandment would not have caused sin to revive and him to die. It is only to the living soul that the law is felt to be a ministration of condemnation and death. On the day of pentecost there were many living souls, who, up to that time, had been working under the law. When Peter was inspired by the Holy Ghost to proclaim the end of that dispensation, and the abrogation of all its ritual service by the death of Christ whom they had crucified, and to proclaim him as having been made both Lord and Christ, this word that he preached pricked them in the heart, inflicting a death wound, killing them to all hope of ever again approaching a holy God by the works of the law. Only those who had spiritual life, and were by that enabled to see the just demands of

the law, making its service a heavy yoke to them, and yet knowing no other way of pleasing God but by striving to keep it, only those could be pricked in the heart. No natural man was thus made to feel the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. But those who had seen a necessity for a sacrifice for sin, as Abel did, and who had heretofore known no other than that which pertained to the worldly sanctuary and Levitical priesthood, were made to feel the hopelessness of their case when the end of that dispensation of legal sacrifices was announced, and they were assured that God would never accept them again. That was fulfilled in their experience the words of Joel, the prophet. The sun, representing all natural wisdom and knowledge, was turned into darkness, the moon, representing the law, was turned into blood, demanding the death of the sinner, and they saw signs of death, destruction, and desolation in those legal heavens and in that legal earth, blood and fire, and pillars of smoke, and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter proclaimed to them the gospel, and its blessings and privileges, and they gladly received his word.

This was apostolic work. Since the last word by the apostles was spoken and written, none can ever do apostolic work again. They are still on the twelve thrones, but it is by the words left on record that they judge the church of God.

But, in the experience of the saints, the same order still prevails. First, a knowledge of the law by the light of divine life, then a knowledge of the death it demands, then an experience of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. In this experience the preacher can render no help. But his preaching follows on in the path the Savior leads. He tells the story to the hearer no faster that it is told in his soul by the Savior. His preaching of the truth is sweet, for

its sweetness has been felt within. Many have passed through all the order of experience, from the first knowledge of the law's demands to a full deliverance, before they have ever heard the gospel preached by man. Then, from that time, it is a savor of life unto life to them. They are fish that are caught by it. They are sheep and lambs to be fed by it. Wherever they are, among false professors, or in the world of the unbelievers, they can never listen to it with indifference, but it will have a drawing power upon their souls. By it they are ministered to, edified, perfected in the knowledge of the truth whose power is in the heart, sustained under heavy trials, comforted in affliction, encouraged in darkness, until they have finished their course as witnesses in this world of sin and sorrow. Then tongues will cease, and prophecies will fail. Knowledge will vanish away, and faith will be lost in sight. And love, sweet, holy love, which has been the one never failing light, and comfort, and guide of our souls while here, will open to us the gates of eternal day, and usher us into that world where all is love.

Elder Silas H. Durand

January 8, 1881

A DEMONSTRATION OF DEBASED VALUES

In the attention given the murder on December 8 of John Lennon of the renowned "Beatles" quartet, and the worldwide reaction to it, occurred an outstanding demonstration of the debased value system which generally characterizes our time. The following day, the news coverage was virtually given over to the man's death and the widespread mourning which it caused. Having been one of the songwriters as well as singers of the "Beatles," Lennon was hailed as "the Bach, the Beethoven, the Rachmaninoff of our time," and lauded by otherwise intelligent newspeople as one who understood and

interpreted life, and made immeasurable contribution to music and human welfare.

Men and women in their thirties wept in the streets as they lamented the passing of Lennon, and throngs gathered in major cities of the world to pay tribute to him. Not since the death of Elvis Presley, another of Lennon's sort, had there been such widespread grief over a singer's death. Coverage of the murder and the response which it occasioned continued in the media for days. Everywhere, people rushed into record shops to buy up all the available "Beatles" offerings, especially a late album by Lennon.

The murderous violence by which Lennon was cut down at the age of forty is, of course, to be deplored. But, on any proper evaluation of the man and his work, the attention given to his death and the unrestrained reaction to it throughout the world, is not only completely unjustified, but revelative of the shameful and tragic breakdown in values which now prevails.

To call the stuff Lennon wrote and which the "Beatles" sang "music," not to mention comparing him to Bach and Beethoven, is itself a ravishment of the word "music." Characteristically, it was nothing but hard "rock," which is to say a bedlam of noise designed to inflame the sinful passions and set the style and pace of wild and disordered bodily movements. It is impossible to calculate the irreparable harm which such composition has done to the appreciation of genuine music.

When it comes to a representation of Lennon (who, among other things, blasphemously boasted that he was more popular than Jesus Christ) as understanding and portraying life, there is an even grosser absurdity. Apparently, the only life he understood and exhibited in his "music" was that of the flesh, and the decidedly animalistic part of the flesh at that. Eternity alone will disclose the moral deterioration

wrought throughout the world by the lives and works of Lennon, Presley, and the like. It is beyond question that they have led millions down the road to sin and profligacy, so corrupting them - in most cases - in the early years of their existence.

The work of the "Beatles" and their kind in the "rock" craze has had a degenerative effect upon the music of even the church. People now speak with a straight face of "Jesus rock," and those of us who still cleave to the biblical concept of the august God sitting in Divine glory upon the universal throne in heaven are called upon to join in His "praise" by music set to the beat popularized by the depraved "Beatles."

Yes, the treatment and reaction to Lennon's death was wholly ridiculous, judged by true standards of appraisal. It would be interesting and immensely enlightening to know how it was viewed in heaven. Having the Mind of Christ, we are bold to say we have at least some idea. To put it mildly and in earthly terms, the event, instead of dominating the news for days, and causing universal mourning, would, had it been written up by an angel of God, have fared quite differently. It probably would have been reduced to a single paragraph inserted on an inside page and to a thirty-second announcement on the air, and would have gotten little attention beyond the immediate family of the deceased. Such is the vast gulf between how things really are and how they are perceived to be by a corrupted world.

Copied from The Banner Of Truth

OBITUARIES

SISTER EMMA HOLMES

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to call from our midst Sister Emma Holmes.

Sister Holmes was born August 17, 1891, the daughter of Andrew Washington and Lou Quina Stewart. She passed away June 11, 1980, making her stay on earth 88 years.

Sister Holmes was united in marriage to Preston Holmes. To this union was born Hiram Jefferson Holmes, Grace Asilia Jernigan; Dunn, N.C.; Malon Alison Holmes; Jacksonville, Florida; Mamie Christelle DeRenizis; Youngstown, Ohio; Emma Dainese Barefoot; Chesapeake, Virginia; Nellie Mae Gillman; Fayetteville, N.C.; Jewel Swinson; Catsonville, Maryland; Betty Lou Tew; Godwin, N.C.; and several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Sister Holmes became a charter member of Liberty Primitive Baptist Church the first Sunday in August, 1955. She attended church when she had a way to go and when health permitted. She had been in declining health for several years.

Her funeral was held at Liberty Church by her Pastor, Elder C. D. Turner, and Mr. Sherrill Pope. She was laid to rest beneath a beautiful mound of flowers in Bethsadia Cemetery.

The Church agreed to send a copy to the *Signs of the Times* for publication, one to the family and one for our Church record.

May God bless her loved ones.

Committee: Brother James Young
Sister Bessie Hall

S. COOPER LUPER

God has seen fit in His all wise and just ways to remove from our midst another of His little ones, S. Cooper Luper, whom we loved and enjoyed fellowshiping for so many years.

Brother Luper, born March 28, 1889 departed this life on November 14, 1980 at the age of 91. He was married to Lily Norville in December, 1912. To this union were born two daughters who survive him, Mrs. Mattie May Williams and Mrs. Lily Sylvia Pollard both of Rocky Mount. A son, C. Jackson Luper, preceeded him in death. Also surviving are four grandchildren and ten great grandchildren.

For fifty-three years Brother Luper enjoyed membership at Pleasant Hill Primitive Baptist Church, Edgecombe County, North Carolina, having been

received into fellowship there August 27, 1927.

He was something special to those who knew him best and were able to communicate with him. Brother Luper was born with a severe hearing defect that affected his speech and his ability to communicate with those who were not accustomed to his handicaps. Though he heard and understood very little that was said around him, he was as strong as anyone in his belief of Salvation by the Grace of God, and the weakness of man.

It wasn't unusual for Brother Luper to express his feelings in his own way that would reflect his learnings from the All Wise and Powerful Teacher who never fails to reach His children -- old or young, handicapped or normal. Since his hearing was so extremely impaired we knew he felt things and had an understanding of things that had to come from God.

The writer recalls from time to time of having been to meeting someplace once when Brother Luper was among his carload. On the return trip home everyone in the car was so elated at having heard such good preaching and were expressing their feelings about such a special day. Brother Luper, unaware of what all the clatter was related to, looked around and said, "That was some good preaching today, I don't know what they said", but with a clinched fist and a shutter of his body, he added, "I just felt it, I just felt it!" This my friends said to me he had been given a hearing ear even though his natural ears were near completely deaf.

His funeral was conducted from Johnson Funeral Home in Rocky Mount, N.C. November 16, 1980 by his beloved pastor, Elder Henry Jones, assisted by Elder Michael Neikirk and he was laid to rest in Pineview Cemetery in Rocky Mount where we have a hope that he will hear the Father's call to come home.

While we miss him at Pleasant Hill and sympathize with his family at their great loss, we do not wish him back into this world of trials and tribulations.

Written by order of conference at Pleasant Hill Church, by one who loved him and enjoyed his company many many times.

Resolved that a copy of this obituary be placed on the church records, one sent to the family and one to the "Signs of the

Times".

J. Carroll Williams

Elder Henry Jones, Moderator

J. Carroll Williams, Clerk

SISTER MINNIE PASCHAL LOFTIS

Our dear Sister (and church clerk) was born July 25, 1893 and was numbered (by experience) with (27) twenty-seven organizing members when New Hope Primitive Baptist Church was constituted by presbytery May 10, 1913, a charter member, and was chosen church clerk May 8, 1948 and served active until January 1972. Sister Minnie remained a faithful member and honorary clerk until her death April 21, 1980. We, who hope we are, the Church at New Hope, Rockingham County, North Carolina, will miss Sister Minnie in our midst, yet cannot mourn her enter into eternal rest.

Sister Loftis is survived by four daughters, Sister Hessie L. Barber, Metra L. Boyd, Gladys L. Myers and Bailey L. Craddock. Three sons Joe T. Jr., Vance and Melvin Loftis; 23 grandchildren and 35 great grandchildren. Five sisters, Cassie P. Williams, Sister Della P. Mangum, Ada P. Williams, Onie P. Isley and Ruby P. Hammock. Five brothers, Jesse, Arther, Richard, Brother Loxley and Roy Paschal.

Weep no more dear children
No need for a sad heart
It is only a brief time
We will have to be apart

God with His everlasting mercy
Can dry each and every tear
He has and will foever
Take care, so have no fear

T'was His own will and purpose
The appointed time for my stay
Eighty-six years on this earth
And now, to take me away

Away from the children I love
Only God can know how dear
In His great and loving kindness
I'll still to you feel near

Brothers and Sisters of the Church
To you I bid farewell
If it be God's will to continue
In your memory may I dwell

It has been so very wonderful
The past sixty-seven years
To be a part of your joys at New Hope
Your love, your hope and your tears

Each tear was for a purpose
As was each glorious appointment we shared

It was all in His arrangement
Foreordained and perfectly prepared

The spiritual knowledge He gives us
So little and yet so great
He knows just what we need
And the exact time to relate

He knows just when to rekindle
A seemingly abated spark
To a beautiful brilliant glow
To light to our heavenly Ark

If it be the gracious Lord's will
The church body, in peace, to abide
May we look to Him for guidance
He's our joy and glorious pride

He is the only one we have to look to
The only one we truly adore
The one and only to call to
To "Please preach some more"

Life here was peacefully ended
April the twenty-first day
Was laid to rest in New Hope cemetery
Under a beautiful floral array

Four lovely Elders relate a God given
And in His predetermined way
Elders Kiser, Hutchens, Gates and Spencer
So perfectly ended the day.

Written by Fannie Sue Ware, as requested
by the Church.

Ordered one copy to *The Signs of the Times*, one copy to the family and one copy to the Church records.

Elder Clyde M. Kiser, Moderator
Dixie A. Kiser, Clerk

SISTER MARY MAGDALENE PEARSON

"...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (Psalm 30:5)

Only through and by the tender mercies granted unto us by our Heavenly Father, might we rejoice in the passing of our dear sister in Christ, Sister Mary Magdalene Pearson, knowing that she lies resting in God's care.

Born in Fulton County, Hickman, Kentucky, Sister Pearson fell asleep in Jesus on March 5, 1980 at the age of 78.

Daughter of Arnold Ralph and Lennie Sledge Green, Sister Pearson resided in Kalamazoo, Michigan for more than 50 years.

Following the death of her first husband, Sister Mary was united in marriage on September 19, 1930, with Alfred Pearson Sr., who also preceded her in death, on March 24, 1967. Three children were born to this union:

Mr. Alfred Pearson, Jr., Mrs. Max (Mary J.) Doolittle, and Miss Anne M. Pearson, all residents of Kalamazoo. Survivors from her first marriage are one son, Michael L. Harris of Southfield, Michigan, and also three grandchildren: Steven L. and Judy R. Harris, both of Detroit, Michigan, and Mark A. Doolittle of Kalamazoo. Also surviving are two sisters, Mrs. Odellia Laird of Mayfield, Kentucky and Mrs. Louise Belt of Hickman, Kentucky, as well as several nieces and nephews.

Sister Mary first united with the Zion Primitive Baptist Church A.D. 1819 in Mayfield, Kentucky in March 1926, baptized by the Pastor, Elder O. W. Perkins. A devoted member, Sister Mary transferred her membership by way of letter to the Shiloh Church in Elkhart, Indiana and again in August 1969 to Little Zion Primitive Baptist Church in Dearborn, Michigan, where she remained a devoted member until the time of her passing.

All those who knew and loved her so, would agree that Sister Pearson was truly a "soldier of the cross and follower of the Lamb", only by the grace of The Almighty God. Sister Pearson loved to proclaim the Goodness of God, often for hours at a time, and her mind was centered almost continually on the scriptures and on the many hymns which she loved so well. On the Sunday preceding her passing, the members of Little Zion sang, by request, "O When Shall I See Jesus", over long distance telephone to our dear sister.

Sister Mary's funeral was preached by Elder Howard Edwards at the Langeland Memorial Chapel in Kalamazoo, Michigan, on Saturday March 8th. She was laid to rest in the Mount Ever-Rest Cemetery, also located in Kalamazoo, there to await the second coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God, that He has caused us to understand that our loss of Sister Mary Pearson, is truly her eternal gain.

We respectfully request that a copy of this memorial be sent to the family of the departed, to each of the various church papers, and also for a copy to be retained in our church records.

Written by Brother Richard Patton
Accepted As Written By Little Zion
Primitive Baptist Church, Dearborn, MI

Signs of the Times

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All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Keeling, Virginia, as shown below. All notices of meetings and obituaries should be mailed directly to P.O. Box 1250, Salisbury, Md. 21801. Articles for publication may be mailed to either address.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 5/81
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

NOTE

The articles beginning here on Page 97 and continuing thru Page 107 are reprinted from the *Signs of the Times*, May, 1881.

This marks the one hundredth anniversary of the death of Elder Gilbert Beebe, founder and sole editor of the *Signs* for nearly fifty years. We hope the readers will find this profitable.

Thank you,
Editors

SUDDEN DEATH OF THE SENIOR EDITOR

At ten minutes before four o'clock P.M. on Monday, May 2nd, 1881, Elder Gilbert Beebe received his discharge and was called home to receive the crown laid up for those who have fought the good fight. While our hearts are thus bowed down with grief we do not feel able to write an extended obituary, but knowing the anxiety that will be felt by our brethren, friends, and readers in general to learn every particular attending his last hours, we will, God giving us the strength, attempt the painful duty of giving an account of his death.

The cause of his death was apoplexy, from which he suffered but a few hours. He arose, the morning of the day he died, dressed himself, and ate his breakfast, apparently in his usual health, but when he got up from the table complained of a headache, and being advised to lie down, he returned to his room and laid down, and soon fell

asleep, and remained so until about half-past eleven, when he got up and stood by his bed and exclaimed, "O, I can't stand it, I can't stand it!" He was assisted back to the bed and his head bathed with liniment, when he said, "Be careful and not get it in my eye". These were his last coherent words, for he immediately passed into a comatose state, from which he never revived. He died with but a slight struggle, and sensed no pain after about half-past eleven o'clock A.M.

Our meeting-house not being sufficiently commodious, the funeral was held in the First Presbyterian Church, Elder William J. Purington speaking from 2 Timothy 4:7, 8; "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing". After which Elders W. Housel and S. H. Durand made a few brief and appropriate remarks. The remains were taken to the New Vernon burying ground and there laid peacefully away among its kindred in the flesh.

He attended church meeting in this place on Saturday, April 30th, and meeting the next day, following his son William L. Beebe, speaking for about half an hours from 2 Cor. 5:20, 21; "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him".

And now, dear brethren, pray for us that our strength fail not. We are left doubly alone, bereft of father and of helmsman, and feel the need of the prayers of our brethren that we may be guided by him who for so many years has sustained, directed, and been the support of our dear father. We have no

other trust, and unless kept by him, who is too wise to err, we must utterly fail.

We append hereto articles from our local papers giving some of the more interesting incidents of his life.

Editor

(FROM THE MIDDLETOWN DAILY PRESS)

This community was shocked last evening to learn of the sudden death of Elder Gilbert Beebe, which occurred at ten minutes of four yesterday afternoon, from a stroke of apoplexy, which he suffered at half-past eleven o'clock in the morning, and from which he never rallied. He remained unconscious from the time of the first attack, breathing heavily, but probably insensible to pain, and dying without a struggle. He was in the full vigor of health and strength up to the time of his sudden and fatal illness.

His tenacity of life, although he had reached the age of four score, and his well preserved powers had been a matter of remark to all who knew him, and although this manner of death had been predicted for him by some of his friends, still it was as unexpected as it was sudden.

During the past winter his health had even been better than usual, and he was expecting soon to start on his accustomed Southern summer trip, attending Old School Baptist Associations in several states. Already letters had been received from various associations urging him to visit them, for he was a very welcome guest at every Old School Baptist gathering.

We have the privilege of publishing below a brief autobiography of the old patriarch, together with a statement of his religious life and views, which he prepared at the request of the local editor of this paper nearly five years ago. It is a characteristic document, which will be of interest to the public as a declaration of the principles of Old School Baptist doctrine, of which he was

a leading exponent, and will be of particular interest to his followers and friends as the only autobiography he has ever written. It is as follows:

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Middletown, N.Y. April 1876

Mr. Slauson: In fulfillment of my promise, I will state some of the most important incidents of my life. I was born in the town (now city) of Norwick, Conn., on the 25th day of November, 1800. At a very early period, and as far back as my memory extends, I was seriously impressed with a solemn conviction of my sinful and lost condition as a sinner, and of the necessity of being "born again", to qualify me to see the kingdom of God. When I think from my best remembrance of the date, I was not more than seven or eight years old, I was made to hope and rejoice in God as my Savior, and to feel his love shed abroad in my heart. I think that at that tender age I was taught of God to know what no other being could teach me, that "Salvation is of the Lord". From that hour I have had no confidence in the power of men to effect or help in the least to effect the salvation of a sinner. In 1811 I was baptized by Elder John Sterry, and received as a member of the Baptist Church in Norwick. This was many years before the division of the Missionary or Fullerite Baptists from the Primitive order, and before any organized religious societies or institutions were known or tolerated in the Baptist denomination in our country.

In 1816, I came to the city of New York, and afterward became identified, by letter, with the Ebenezer Baptist Church, where I was called to exercise my gift, and was finally licensed to preach the gospel, this was about the year 1818. I then traveled in several states as an itinerant preacher, and supplied the Third Baptist Church in Baltimore three or four months in about 1821-2, but

it suited my mind better to be traveling. I never failed to find places where I was well received, and without any support from missionary arrangement I was fully sustained, so that I could say as did the disciples whom Jesus sent out without purse or script, when they returned, that I had lacked nothing.

In 1823, February 4, I was married in the city of New York, and in the same year was ordained to the pastoral care of the Baptist Church of Ramapo, in Rockland County, N.Y., and continued with them until May, 1826, when I accepted a call to the pastorate of the Baptist Church at New Vernon, N.Y. This church was constituted about 1786, and my predecessor, Elder Benjamin Montanye, had served them as pastor thirty-three years. He died in December, 1825, and I succeeded him the following May. So it will be seen that this ancient church has been supplied for the last eighty-three (now eighty-eight) years by but two pastors. During the fifty years of my connection I spent the principal part of three years and a half in Alexandria, and Upper Broad Run, Va., and the Shiloh Church in Washington, D.C., but continued to visit New Vernon regularly during the time, and finally removed to New Vernon, in April, 1840.

For about forty years I have also served the Middletown and Wallkill Church, in connection with my labors in and with New Vernon.

During the half century all the members of both churches have been called to their inheritance above with the exception of about four or five. The two churches contain a membership now of about one hundred and eighty, nearly all of whom have been gathered into the fold, besides many others who have been called away, since I have been with them.

The division, or separation, of the Missionary Baptists in these parts, from those of the old order, took place about forty years ago. I stand today rooted and

grounded in the faith and order on which the whole Baptist denomination in our country stood when I united with them sixty five years ago. I have found no occasion to depart from either the faith or order of the Church of God, as organized on the day of Pentecost. I cannot find by sixty-five years of careful and prayerful searching of the Scriptures, that those primitive saints who gladly received the word at Pentecost and continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, had any religious organizations as auxiliaries to the Church of God, existing among them. No Mission Boards for converting the heathen or for evangelizing the world; no Sunday Schools as nurseries to the church; no schools of any kind for teaching theology or divinity, or for preparing young men for the ministry; no pious rehearsals of the "Melodies of Mother Goose" or "Jack Horner" or the "cow jumping over the moon", among the institutions of Christ or his apostles. I am content to be considered all of eighteen hundred and forty-three years behind the progressive religious doings of the more popular religionists of the present time. I have never been identified with, nor have I had any fellowship for any religious rites, forms, fashions, or customs which cannot be found in the laws of Christ, and practice of the apostles and primitive saints. I do not denounce those who differ with me in regard to these things; to their own masters they stand or fall; nor do I dispute that there are among them some of God's quickened children; that is not my province. "The Lord knoweth them that are his", and he can bring them out of their idolatry in his own good time. But while I live I expect to protest solemnly, soberly, but not with unkind or malicious feelings, against their spiritual wickedness in high places.

The *Signs of the Times*, as you are aware, has been published by me nearly forty-four years. During all this time it

has been devoted to the defense of what my eternal destiny rests upon as the truth as it is in Jesus. My warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and against the rulers of the darkness of this world.

My race is nearly run. I am now in the seventy-sixty year of my age. My voice will soon be silenced in death, my pen will pass into the hands of another, and I hope abler writer, but the eternal truth for which I have so long contended will be lasting as the days of eternity. And when all the deceptive and luring doctrines and institutions of men shall be exposed, and all who have trusted in a refuge of lies shall bewail their folly and call for rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the presence of the Lamb, those who know and love the truth shall in the truth rejoice for evermore.

Gilbert Beebe

Elder Gilbert Beebe was the son of David Beebe, who was born and died at Norwich, Conn. His mother, whose maiden name was Eunice Case, and was a native of the same place, survived her husband some years and died in New York City. Her remarkable son, although he came to be one of the best biblical scholars in the country and one of the most vigorous writers, had but meager schooling, never having attended school after the age of nine years. He learned the trade of a baker early in life and followed it at Norwich and in New York City until he began preaching. After he had made some reputation as a preacher, he still continued to work at his trade, both in New York City and New Vernon, where he erected a cracker bakery, pursuing that business in connection with his religious labors.

While yet a resident of New York City, he married Miss Phebe A. Cunningham, who still survives him and who has been

in every sense a helpmate for him. Their married life of over fifty-eight years has been a very happy one. She is the only survivor of her immediate family except one brother, S. P. Cunningham, who resides at Watkins, N.Y. Although she is seventy-eight years of age and has been an invalid for years she is still in possession of all her remarkable mental powers, and bears the shock of this bereavement with a calmness and fortitude both of christian resignation.

There have been born to them thirteen children, seven sons and six daughters, of whom eight are living. Four died in childhood, or infancy, Robert George, the third, aged six, James Moore, the fifth, aged two, Sarah Elizabeth, the tenth, aged Ten, and Cassandra Isabella, the youngest, an infant. The oldest son was Gilbert Judson, a man of remarkable talent, who died in 1872. He was an associate of his father in numerous public debates in which he demonstrated remarkable powers in that direction. He was the founder of the "Middletown Mercury", now published in this village, and of the "Banner of Liberty", now published at Ellenville and circulating mainly in the Southern states.

The surviving children named in order of their ages are Mrs. Harriet M. LaRue, of Castleman's Ferry, Clark Co., Va., Elder William L. Beebe, now visiting here, Mrs. Phebe A. McNally, of Ridgebury, wife of Mr. J. J. McNally, a well known journalist, Robert James, residing in the South, George M., of Monticello, N. Y., Mrs. Mary Virginia, wife of Hon. J.D. Little, publisher of the "Putnam County Courier", of Carmel, N.Y., Mrs. Frances C., wife of W. J. Kellum, of New York, and Benton L., of Middletown.

Elder William L. Beebe is the only son who has followed the calling of his father. He preached in the South for many years, and latterly in Canada, retiring from pastoral work within the past year on account of ill health.

Hon. George M. Beebe, who is a well known politician and publisher of the Monticello "Watchman", has achieved a national reputation. When very young he was Secretary and later acting Governor of the territory of Kansas. Since then he has served two terms in the State Legislature and two terms in Congress.

Mr. Benton L. Beebe, who is the youngest member of the family, ever since leaving school has been connected with his father's publishing office and for the past four years has been associate editor of the *Signs of the Times*.

Two sisters of Mr. Beebe survive him: Mrs. Frances Vreeland and Mrs. Emma White, who with their husbands, reside in Brooklyn.

Elder Gilbert Beebe, at the time of his death, was the only surviving minister who was present at the notable convention at Black Rock, Maryland, in 1832, when the separation took place between the Missionary or New School and the Old School or Primitive Baptist Churches. He opposed the innovations of the Missionary element at that gathering, and has ever since been the leading defender of the Old School Baptist cause. It was to further this cause that in the fall of 1832 he established at New Vernon the *Signs of the Times*, which was for many years the only organ of that faith. For the first year it was printed at the Independent Republican office in Goshen, and since that he has been his own publisher, the office being at New Vernon until 1836, at Alexandria, Virginia, until 1840, at New Vernon again until 1847, and since that time at Middletown. Its circulation, which extends to every state in the Union and Canada, reached at one time 6,700, and is not far short of that figure now, although there are several other publications devoted to the same cause. It is valued by its readers not only for the correspondence between brethren, and the minutes of the associations which it

publishes, but for Elder Beebe's editorials, of which there was one or more in every issue. Such has been the demand for the editorials that two volumes of them have been compiled by his son, B.L. Beebe, and published in book form, covering the first eighteen years of his writing. He compiled and published the Old School Baptist hymn book in general use in the denomination, and which has run through several editions, the sale reaching over 20,000.

In his long ministry of sixty-three years, he preached an average of not less than three sermons a week, or not less than ten thousand sermons. They were all extemporaneous and given without special preparation from any text. He never repeated a sermon, and in fact, would have been unable to do so. He made the whole scriptures his study and was always prepared to preach or write at request on any given text. He probably officiated at more weddings and funerals, and had performed more pastoral work than any other man in the ministry. He has traveled more miles and was personally known to more people than any other gospel minister in this country.

In his earlier career, he was frequently a participant in public debates on religious and political questions. He opposed the state school system, meeting Dr. Page, Professor Davies, then of West Point, and others on this question. He claimed that as God had entrusted the care of children to parents, it could not with safety to Republican institutions be transferred to the state. He took strong ground against the necessity for total abstinence societies and vigorously opposed prohibitory legislation, although he was always an advocate of Bible temperance and himself a total abstainer, except for medical purposes. As to the institution of slavery, he believed that, having been recognized by Christ and his apostles it was divinely sanctioned, and not to be

questioned of men. While never an advocate of slavery or a defender of its abuses, he opposed the position of those he termed fanatics, who charged that it was the "sum of all villainies".

The death of Elder Beebe will be an irreparable loss to the denomination he has so long and so efficiently championed, and will be felt by the followers as a personal bereavement. He will be missed and talked of wherever there is an Old School Baptist gathering for years to come.

As a citizen, his life has been above reproach, and his private virtues and manly character and unselfish devotion to what he believed to be right, have been the admiration of all who knew him. He was a man of kindly nature, genial disposition, affable manners and dignified bearing. In his death a good man has gone and his memory will be long and tenderly cherished in the hearts of his devoted family, and a large circle of admiring friends and followers.

(From the Middletown Daily Argus)

ELDER GILBERT BEEBE

A long and useful life is ended. A faithful servant of God has gone to his reward, and through his reward is great, sorrow sits enthroned in the hearts of relatives and friends at the sudden sundering of the many strong ties that bound them to him; and relatives and friends are not the only mourners, for none who knew Elder Beebe can hear of his death without a feeling of almost personal loss.

His last illness was of very brief duration. He was not in his usual health on Sunday, and at the service in the church only made a few remarks from the text "Be ye reconciled to God", the selection of which as the theme of the last words he was to address to his people seems almost prophetic in its appropriateness. Monday morning he complained of a severe pain in his head, and about eleven o'clock he sank into an unconscious condition from which he

never rallied, dying about four o'clock, so quietly that the tearful watchers at his bedside hardly knew when time ended and eternity began.

Elder Gilbert Beebe was born in Norwick, Conn., Nov. 25, 1800. When seven years old he embraced religion, was baptized when eleven years old, and joined the Baptist Church at Norwick at the age of sixteen. He began to preach when eighteen in the Ebenezer Church, New York City, then located in Spring Street. For several years he traveled as an itinerant preacher, and in 1823 he was ordained as pastor of the church at Ramapo, Rockland County. In 1826 he became pastor of the church at New Vernon, and a few years afterward he succeeded Elder Terry as pastor of the Wallkill Church, a relation that continued uninterruptedly with both churches until his death. He removed to Middletown in 1847, and about that time began to hold services Sunday afternoons in the Orchard Street Hall, preaching in the mornings on alternate Sundays in the New Vernon and Wallkill churches. When the church in this village was erected in 1871, the services in the Wallkill Church were discontinued and thereafter he preached at New Vernon Sunday mornings and in this village in the afternoons. Although he still remained pastor of the church at New Vernon he had preached there but seldom of late, his assistant, Elder Benton Jenkins, since his ordination in 1879, having relieved him of much of the work.

In September, 1832, he began the publication of the *Signs of the Times* at New Vernon. In 1848 the office was removed to this village, or South Middletown, as it was then called, the first number printed here bearing date March 15, 1848. In 1846, after the death of Elder Jewett, of Warwick, the paper published by him, called the "Doctrinal Advocate and Monitor", was merged into the *Signs*, and for a time the paper bore both names. The sub-title was,

however, soon dropped. The *Signs* has been for many years the recognized organ of the Old School Baptist denomination. It circulates in all parts of this country where Old School Baptists live, and also in Canada and England. Through its columns Elder Beebe's vigorous intellect and ready pen controlled the thought of the church, and held the wavering steadfast to the bulwarks of the faith. It is impossible to overestimate the extent and power of the influence that he exerted, and it is safe to say that this great power could have been in no safer hands, for he knew no other motive than the right, and trusted implicitly in God for light and guidance.

His life was wholly consecrated to his Master's service. He was interested in and cared for nothing but the cause of Christ. During all the years of his pastorate he preached without salary, and so thoroughly was he absorbed in his higher and more important duties that his business interests often suffered by neglect. The amount of work that he performed was prodigious. It is estimated that in his ministerial work he traveled at least ten thousand miles a year, attending associations and discharging other duties. For nearly fifty years he preached regularly twice, and often three times, on every Sunday, and often during the week; and for nearly fifty years of this time he was sole editor of the *Signs*, preparing for its columns an amount of original matter greater than is published in any other religious paper. He compiled a hymn book, the first edition of which was published in 1859, and which has commanded a sale of 30,000 copies. He also published a number of pamphlets, mostly controversial in their nature. His editorials in the *Signs* have been reprinted in book form, two volumes covering fifteen years, from 1832 to 1847, having been published.

Elder Beebe was a man of vigorous and independent habits of thought, and he never hesitated, no matter how

unpopular his ideas might be, to avow and uphold them on all proper occasions. In several instances, public discussion being then more popular than now, he met and debated questions of public interest with persons holding different views. The first of these debates, of which record is preserved, was held Oct. 3, 1843, in the Presbyterian Church of this village. At this time the Washingtonian Temperance Movement was at its height, and Elder Beebe disapproved of some of the principles of the "Temperance Society", asserting that they were anti-scriptural and implicated Christ and his disciples as immoral and wicked; that the Society set up a standard of temperance which the scriptures have not authorized, and attached to it a superiority over the Bible rule; that the doctrines of the Society, in which the pledge of total abstinence is made a test of church fellowship, and also of political preferment, are subversive of the principles of democracy and of true religion, and constitute a connecting link uniting church and state, and calculated to overthrow civil and religious rights. J. J. Pierce, Esq., of Columbus Pa., challenged Elder Beebe to a public discussion of the propositions he had advanced. The debate attracted a large audience. Hon. J. Finch and D. L. Harding were chosen Moderators on the part of the affirmative, and Wm. Bross and N. R. Conklin on the part of the negative. They chose Hezekiah Watkins as President. The debate was a long one, and though Elder Beebe had the unpopular side of the discussion, he was so well fortified with scriptural knowledge, as ready to meet and repel attack, so equipped with arguments, and so ready in their use that he worsted his antagonist at every point.

Again, Sept. 30, 1844, when the Free School Act was a topic of general and immediate interest, a public meeting was held at Goshen for its discussion. Jonathan Wood, of Minisink, was

President, and V. M. Drake, of Goshen, Secretary. Prof. Potter, of Union College; Rev. Mr. Page, Rev. Dr. McCarthy, and Hon. S. S. Wilkin, of Goshen; John Duer, of New York; H. H. Romeyn, of Ulster, and many others spoke in favor of the measure. *Elder Beebe was alone to lift his voice against it, maintaining with great ability that it was subversive of the principles of Republican government, and opposed to the teachings of the Bible, since it vested the control of the child in the state instead of the parents.* At another time he discussed the Sabbath question with the minister of the Dutch Church, Bloomingburgh in that church.

During all his life he was a firm believer in the doctrines of human equality and of popular rights as taught by Jefferson and exemplified by the Democratic party. His faith in these principles never wavered and he clung to them through good report and evil report with the same earnestness and forgetfulness of self that characterized his allegiance to whatever he believed to be right.

Elder Beebe was married in New York, Feb. 4, 1823, to Miss Phebe Cunningham, who survives him. The fruits of their marriage were thirteen children, of whom eight survive. They are Mrs. Harriett M. LaRue, of Virginia; Elder William L. Beebe, of Canada; Mrs. Phebe A. McNally, of this village; Robert J. Beebe; Hon. Geo. M. Beebe, of Monticello; Mrs. Mary Virginia Little, of Carmel; Mrs. Frances Kellum, of New York; and Benton L. Beebe of this village.

Elder Beebe, living, deserved and enjoyed the respect and esteem of all who knew him. Dead, he merits every tear and every kind and honoring word that can be spoken in his memory. Yet, in the presence of a life that was so rounded and complete, a life that was in the best and fullest sense a type of perfect manhood, a life that is more

eloquent than words, all eulogies and panegyrics are trite and commonplace.

No words of ours can add to the love that enshrines his memory in the hearts of those who knew him intimately, or increase the esteem that all others feel for one so upright and so godly. The history of a life's work such as his is the noblest eulogy that can be written of any man. His work here is ended, yet for such as he

"There is no death.
What seems so is transition.
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian,
Whose portals we call Death"

THE LAST EDITORIAL ARTICLE
WRITTEN BY
ELDER GILBERT BEEBE

THE CORNER, NAIL, THE BATTLE,
BOW AND EVERY OPPRESSOR

Dear Brother Beebe:--Please give your views on Zech. 10:4, "Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together". I do not recollect of ever having heard any of the brethren preach from this text, and would be glad to have your views upon it, if agreeable to your feelings to give them and oblige.

Your unworthy brother in gospel bonds,
Jno. R. Martin
Franklin Co., Va. April 4, 1881

REPLY

It would afford us great pleasure to comply with the request of our highly esteemed brother, if we were sure that anything we can say would clearly explain the meaning of the Spirit in the use of the figurative expressions employed in the text. There is danger of running into vain and imaginary speculations when we attempt to elucidate some of the dark metaphors which the Holy Spirit has employed in the scriptures of divine truth. The parables and dark sayings of our God are evidently designed to teach us our dependence on him to reveal to us the hidden treasure which they conceal

from the wise and prudent of mankind, that we may the more fully realize our dependence on him to open the scriptures to our understanding.

The prophet Zechariah was contemporary with Ezra, Nehemiah, Joshua, Zerubbabel and others who prophesied the deliverance of Israel from her seventy years captivity in Babylon, their return to Jerusalem, and restoration of their city and rebuilding of their temple, in all of which the spirit of prophecy evidently pointed to the coming of the Messiah and the setting up of the Redeemer's kingdom under the gospel dispensation. In the chapter preceding the one in which our text is found the cheering prediction is proclaimed in these words: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass". This prediction is applied directly to the coming of Christ--Matt. 21:1-11 and John 11:15. At the time when the prediction should be fulfilled, the Lord by the prophet adds, "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace unto the heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea even to the sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth". All this seems to look forward to the breaking up of the old Jewish dispensation, the breaking down of the wall of partition which had separated the Jews and Gentiles. The time indicated by the Lord in these words: "When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man. And the Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south".

The whole connection of this

prophecy seems to present under many metaphors, first, the literal purging of Judah from her idol shepherds and abominations, and the cutting off from Ephraim and Jerusalem the horse and chariot, battle bow, and all the idolatrous defenses in which they had trusted, drive out all their oppressors, and to restore them their city, temple and privileges, and in doing this figuratively set forth the redemption of his spiritual or antitypical Jerusalem from her captivity and bondage.

Here the pen that for nearly fifty years had not wearied in its labors of consolation, admonition, and instruction, was laid down never to again be taken up in its editorial labors. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord". And may he enable us to be still and know that he is God.

CONTINUANCE OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

We trust it is with a proper appreciation of the great responsibility that has thus suddenly fallen upon us that we inform our brethren of our intention to continue the publication of the *Signs*. For several years we have been associated with our dear father in the publication of the paper, and though we have not felt to occupy much space in the editorial department at the exclusion of what we knew to be matter better calculated for the comfort and instruction of our readers, yet at the same time we have been thoroughly conversant with all the contents of business letters, and communications for publication, inquiries after truth, and everything pertaining to the publication of the paper, and therefore think we fully understand what our subscribers want.

We are not prepared to say just at present what our future business arrangements may be, further than that we propose to engage the aid of an acceptable minister of our faith and order to take charge of the editorial

department, and in doing this we desire the counsel and advice of our brethren. We do not wish to be hasty, but to watch and pray and endeavor to be governed by the moving of the hand of providence. We have several editorials, still unpublished, from the hand of our beloved father, written preparatory to leaving to attend the spring associations, but God in his wisdom has seen fit to take him to himself, to join that association that will never break up. O may he give us grace that we may be enabled to heed the exhortation, "Be ye reconciled to God", which he so earnestly gave in his last discourse.

We have received the assurance of several of our prominent brethren that their kind and efficient aid will still be extended to the *Signs*, and that they will use their influence in its interest; and thus encouraged, we continue on. The publication for the present, at least, will be continued under the old firm name of Gilbert Beebe & Son.

Otego, N.Y.
May 4, 1881

Dear Brother Beebe:--The telegram you kindly sent me, announcing the departure of your dear father from this world of sorrow, was received last evening, and it would have been a great satisfaction could I have attended with other sympathizing friends the funeral of tomorrow. But as I cannot, please accept this acknowledgement of your kindly remembrance of me, and also our undivided sympathy with you all who compose the family of him who has finished his course with joy, and the ministry he received of the Lord Jesus. May reconciling grace be given us all, that we may bow to the divine will, and thus confess the Lord's right to do all his pleasure. We hope to learn by the next *Signs* the particulars of his last days.

In love and sympathy, I am, as ever,
your brother.

Balas Bundy

Wilson, N.C.
May 5, 1881

Dear Signs:--I am sad at hearing of the death of Elder Beebe. Old as he was, and on the limit of life, it yet falls heavily on many of us; and as for me, my feeling is one of sadness. I have no doubt of his happy exchange. He has been gathered to his fathers, and has gone from the land of the dying to that of the living. But we shall miss him so much as an editor and able writer. Seldom has one been so favored with long life and usefulness as he has, and wielded the pen and guided a paper so long and ably as he has the *Signs*.

I tender my sympathies to the bereaved and sorrowing, who are many besides those of his immediate family.

Affectionately,
(Elder) P. D. Gold

Aldie, Virginia
May 3, 1881

Dear Brother Beebe:--Your telegram announcing the death of your beloved father is received. My health just now forbids my attending his funeral. It is a sad blow to us all. "A great man is fallen in Israel". May God reconcile us all to his will. My wife joins me in most earnest, loving sympathy for the afflicted family.

Sincerely your brother,
J. N. Badger

Clay Village, Ky.
May 9, 1881

My Dear Brother Jenkins:--The contents of your note threw a dark gloom over the Baptist community here, and, I suppose, over the entire membership elsewhere. I know not when I heard anything that so discomfited me. It seems to me an almost irreparable loss to the Baptist Church. I write now to ascertain the future prospects of the *Signs of the Times*. I hope it will be continued. If so, Brother B. L. Beebe will need an

assistant. Who will it be? I have thought propably yourself or Brother William L. Beebe would join with him. I hope the brethren generally will do all they can to support it. If I can do anything to encourage its perpetuity it will be freely rendered.

Please reply at your earliest convenience.

Your brother most truly,
(Elder) J. F. Johnson

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Arab, Alabama

Dear Editors,

Please find enclosed a check to renew my subscription to the *Signs* for another year.

I especially appreciated the article on "Absolute Predestination of all Things" over last year. I hope it straightens out the minds that seemed not to understand it.

Too, I like the experiences, and wish we had more of these.

May it please God to bless the Editors and Staff to continue.

Humbly yours,
Fannie Hyatt

Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of hope that is in you with meekness and fear. 1 Peter 3:15

For by grace are ye saved. Eph. 2:8-10
Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. Psalms 107.

Jan. 22, 1981

My Dear Brother:

Greetings in the name of our precious Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is with a sense of weakness and unworthiness that I feel toward myself as I take in hand this pen to write somewhat of the experience which the Almighty God has given to this poor worm of the dust. Many have been the trials during my experiences of life when it seemed that the way before me was that of suffering and death, which was made manifest during my own sins and faults and

imperfections, or because of the Holy law of Christ that worked within: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself. It has been during this experience of mine that the warfare of sufferings has been with me concerning my own depravity as well as from those with out.

As a child I was like a wild ass's colt whose neck had to be broken. From the very beginning of my experience, when at a very early age, there was a fear of God and the prospect of facing the Almighty God in judgement to give an account of all my sins, which brought a deep sense of guilt and condemnation that I would be cast away from Him forever because of my own sinful nature and ungodly deeds and thoughts, which was terrifying. As I am given to look upon my early experience, it was very much like one that was being sued by the law for one's coat and being made to give up his cloak also. I was made to feel that both my outward deeds of the flesh were like the vilest of sinners and my inner nature as corrupt as corruption itself (although at the beginning I could not fully realize what was taking place with me). Now, my brother, it looks like this feeling of depravity should lessen during one's experience, but with me it becomes more apparent every day I live, that it will never improve and many times this old inner nature of the flesh has deceived me because of the pride it breeds to bring forth the deeds of a self-righteous Pharisee, trying to be acceptable unto God.

In this struggle, fight, and suffering with the inner and outward man of corruption, a lively principle of hope was given... "For by grace are ye saved, through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God and not of works lest any man should boast". I did feel a new life which was working and in force that before I did not know.

I was about 15 years old when there was a definite turning point in my life toward the person of Jesus Christ. The feeling of my sins being forgiven and the hope of eternal life flooded my soul with great assurance that I was forgiven of my sins and on the road to everlasting peace and happiness. This feeling of peace did not remain with me very long until doubts and fears again became my bread and drink. Until once again I was brought down in suffering and death to the man, Fred Neikirk, and each time this experience has come to me in my poor unworthy life there is this hope which is of Jesus Christ that rises up in my heart... "For by grace are ye saved through faith..." during these unbearable feelings of mine there is this sweet hope that all is well with Jesus Christ and the work of redemption is sure, when the sins of God's people were laid upon Him and He bore them in His own body on the tree, being made a curse for His own people.

It would be presumptuous on my part to say I know that I am a child of God and have already been saved to the exclusion of hope that is of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord. On the other hand, I would have to deny that there is an Almighty God (loving Father), and Jesus Christ (Saviour) and the blessed Spirit (Revelator), and that all my experiences have been for nought; if I have never felt His Grace nor have an interest in the redemption which is in Jesus Christ the Lord. If I be only a grace-less wretch, formed for the purpose of destruction and condemnation, why do I continue to have these feelings of hope in the blessed Lord that thy sins are forgiven thee for His sake?

In my calling from nature's darkness, I felt not only a deliverance from the world of condemnation but a separation from that world to preach the gospel of Grace and redemption through the precious blood of Christ our Lord. As I am made to reflect back on my experiences as a messenger of God in the

proclamation of the gospel of Grace, I am humbled before the Heavenly Father in realizing why should I be given to speak in His name of this precious gospel of Grace.

It seemed at the beginning of bearing this message to others that my life would be protected and peaceable, but it was not long until I was made to pass through the furnace of afflictions, the waters of Noah, and the belly of the Whale. This experience of traveling with the Lord has been over a period of many years now and the many things have transpired with me in my experiences as my changes have come from One who never changes. Thank God for every evidence toward hope of eternal life!

I was 18 years old when I first arose to speak in public concerning Jesus Christ and the gospel of Grace. Oh! How I labored and fear gripped my very being and trembling took over my weak knees as I struggled to speak, which I thought was for a long period of time but was only for about 10 minutes. Now this was in a missionary Baptist Church which I joined at the age of 15. I remained with these people for many years. I attended their schools and preached in their churches until 1959, when a final separation came over the doctrine of our blessed Lord. I seem to be getting ahead of myself somewhat. Let me go back and say that since I had the false idea that to be a minister one should go to school and read all the books he could to learn the doctrine, and to become qualified as a minister one would have to be fully instructed in the scriptures...so was the feeling of those with whom I was first identified.

During this time with these people and in the further revelation of Jesus Christ concerning the doctrine of Grace, I was made to pass through deep waters of affliction and trials of fire. I was soon made to see that one could not learn the doctrine of Christ by men nor was there a school set up nor books written which

could make a preacher out of a man. This false idea with which I set out in the beginning was soon taken away and total separation from that idea was given; that one could learn to be a good minister by going to school somewhere that was set up by men. When I was liberated from this idea, the Lord taught me concerning the doctrine of election and predestination, and in good conscience before these people, I began to preach this among the missionaries.

The hatred for this doctrine was immediately displayed among these people until I was forced to flee from one place to another and everywhere I travelled the feeling was the same toward the doctrine, especially the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty and predestination of all things. The suffering was more than one could bear without God's grace but the Lord was merciful to me. My family was also made to suffer with me, and with the withdrawal of friends, relatives and fellow servants with whom we had lived and labored leaving us one by one until there was only one here and there that took comfort in the doctrine of Grace. We had been associated with a large multitude of people and now our name was cast out as evil. My former teachers tried to show me of my error, as they saw it to be, and warned me of the way in which I was headed as being the way of the "hardshells".

To be brief in expressing my final separation from these people, called missionary, I was in Kingsport, Tennessee when some came to my home to inform me of a special meeting, called at the church where I was considered to be their pastor, to take a vote on whether I was to remain there with them or not. I was not at home. My dear wife took the message, with this added message.... Your husband believes that God predestinates all things, so we will see about that. If he is pastor after tonight, then we will go right away and leave you alone.... As if to say, that if he stays then

your husband is right and if he goes then he is not right. Needless to say that after their vote, I was gone... but this did not prove nor disprove anything as far as I am concerned. It was at this time that the final separation came from those called Missionary Baptist and I was branded as "hardshell" by them.

Shortly after this experience, I came in contact with others that called themselves Old Baptists or Primitives and Hardshells. Now, I was to be tried again concerning the doctrine of God's absolute predestination, and such questions as "where are the people that believe this doctrine" and "how shall I ever find them"? I talked to some who gave me no comfort at all, speaking of a limited predestination, or that predestination only affects the destiny of people and has nothing to do with time nor events. I also came up against the doctrine of some that proclaimed a time conditional salvation based upon their obedience to God and the co-existence of Satan with God from all eternity. I also heard that God does predestinate time events, and things but not evil things... only good things are predestinated. This also troubled me.

However, there was given to me some comfort at this time concerning the doctrine. I was sent to Memphis, Tenn. to work for a short time. In that city lived an Elder Brown, whom I never met but conversed with him by telephone concerning the doctrine. Here, for the first time, I was speaking to one who affirmed the doctrine that I believed and was openly telling me without being ashamed or trying to explain away the doctrine of God's predestination. What a relief it was to this poor sinner who felt so helpless and so far from home and family, to meet with a kindred spirit, during the night, by conversation over the phone, concerning the doctrine of Grace. I was made to rejoice with anticipation of meeting such a one and to go to meeting with him. But this was not to be nor was I ever to speak with him again.

To me this is the first one of the Primitive Baptist who affirmed this doctrine to me and was not ashamed to speak freely of it.

Also, I must mention that I was to read a writing by Elder Beebe on the subject of God's predestination which was in agreement with my experience. I was made to search the scriptures and to examine my experience and calling over and over again. My experiences were many and at times it seemed that I could never lift my head up again with any joy but here a little and there a little we were given a crumb from the Master's table.

Again, I reflect back upon an experience before being separated from the Missionaries. I was sent into the State of Florida to speak in a Missionary church near Titusville. It was somewhat Calvinistic in persuasion but none-the-less a Missionary church. It was here in this place that the Lord gave to me a vision or dream. As I layed down to sleep that night, feeling a desperation toward almost despair of life, I saw an old man in an old castle which was poorly lit. The old man at first looked to be repulsive to gaze upon, with white hair and stooped in body. I turned to flee from him, up a long stairs; but he seized me in his arms and completely arrested me. His arms were strong and comforting; although at first there was a short feeling of fear, struggle was soon arrested by resting in him and when I beheld his face it was of strong character and wisdom and his words to me were.... "you do not belong in this place". So he delivered me from that place and put me on a bus outside the castle and sent me on my way. My dear brother, and all everywhere who might read this, I have heard men curse this doctrine of election and predestination with a hatred, calling it a damnable doctrine, straight out of the pits of hell, and not of God. If that be so, then I will have to live with it forever and from whence it originated, for not only do I believe it, but having hope of being held in it by the power of God to its

expected hope unto the end for that which will be brought by our blessed Lord at His coming. It is one thing to take hold of something that does not belong to you and another thing for someone or something to take hold of you that has existed with God and your Father from all eternity. This someone and something is Jesus Christ and His precious doctrine of Grace, which was bestowed by grace, and is according to the predeterminate counsel and foreknowledge of God. It has been God, according to His loving kindness and tender mercies in grace, that has brought me where I am. Praise His Holy name!

It is my firm belief, by experience, that it takes something other than the scriptures to make one knowledgeable of this God of whom we write. The Scriptures are written to testify of Jesus Christ, but they do not give the life of Christ. The blessed Spirit of God quickens the children of God who were dead in trespasses and sins, and in the birth that is from above, a new man is brought forth.

As I go back to my experience of redemption, this hope in Christ will not be over until the body is resurrected from the grave. You notice that I speak of the experience of it. The redemption is already over as far as the justification and the reconciliation of it is concerned, but the manifestation of it is being brought forth each and every moment.

In August of 1960, I moved to Lexington, Kentucky, and many months passed with nowhere to meet with those who believed this doctrine of Grace. We were without a job, no income to provide for the family for some time, but the Lord, in His mercy, provided for us. Many of those we knew in our former relationship were now looking upon us as being of those who had lost their senses.

For many years, I longed for the order of the church where the doctrine of God's predestination was upheld,

believed and loved; the ordinances and practices of the church honored, and the manifestation of love among brethren through the Spirit of God which was wrought by an experience of grace, that was a glory to God. At one time I thought I had finally arrived at that place, but once again many hard things were to be my lot.

After many months of being without a place where we could worship with others, we were identified with some called Primitive Baptist. Many years passed during this time and we met many called Primitive Baptist, traveling in several states. In some places we were received and in others we were not because of the particular people that we were with. This was a very sad thing to me, so I was made to examine myself and the doctrine and order again. When the final test came among these people, there was again a separation, especially over the doctrine of predestination and order of the church. It seemed to me that the order was more in question than the doctrine because of secret societies and the like and baptism from other orders, such as Missionary, from which we had come.

After this experience, we were identified briefly with a church in the South, but were soon dismissed by letter to form a church in Kentucky. Again trouble came over doctrine and the order and this came to nought. Another attempt was made to form another church in Kentucky and this also came to nought. It was during this time that I experienced some of the most difficult times of my life. There was sorrow upon sorrow, grief upon grief with tears of anguish flooding my very being to again despair of life, and if it had not been for the Grace of God, surely the waters of Noah would have sunk me into hell itself. My blessed Lord became more real to me than ever and His righteousness was terrible to behold as I was made to feel my own corruption again. I begged for mercy and pleaded

with Him day and night during my waking hours. My food was wormwood it seemed. This was the severiest trial that I have ever endured, and it ended in death to this poor wretch of a man. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. But to me it is better to be there that to fall into the hands of unjust men.

Through many hard things, we had to suffer with others for many years... before we were finally brought to the Old Baptist Church in western Kentucky, called Soldier's Creek, where Elder Paul Poyner is now pastor. It was through Elder Spangler that we first visited these brethren. Here we found an old church, whose pastor was then close to 90 years of age, that preached the doctrine of Christ in its purity and contended for the order of the church and spoke of an experience of grace which must be given of the Lord through revelation; and a love of God manifested among His children through the Spirit. This was in agreement with my experience. I had thought surely I would perish from the earth before I could ever again be in a church to worship again in peace. In fact, in March of 1979, while in the intensive care unit of the hospital, my heart stopped beating for about a minute. I had to be revived by the attendants of the hospital. My family gathered around me and for a little while I felt death and the termination of life here was very near. The doctor prescribed medicine for me that had an adverse effect upon me and I was forced to give up his medication. Oh! how sweet would have been the messenger of death if only peace could be in Jesus Christ our Lord! At this time the Lord gave me a measure of peace and strength to continue on and to hope for a home with God's people. Brethren in different places were of much comfort to me during this time and the words spoken briefly by Elder Griffin in Alabama last year....that God would hasten the day to bring us to the brethren where we could

have peace...were of much help and encouragement.

Last July, the Soldier's Creek Church receive my wife and I into their fellowship after Elder Paul Poyner baptised us. We are at peace concerning the order of the doctrine of Christ, the practices and ordinances of the church and the love and feeling manifest among God's people. The Soldier's Creek Church liberated me to speak and it has been a joy to meet with brethren in different places and meet so many we never knew before. It was a special time for me, last August, to go to the Memphis Church for the first time, where Elder Brown with whom I had talked so many years before by phone, had been pastor and where Elder Chappell, Elder Campbell, Elder Prince and Elder Young are members. It was also a joy to revisit the churches of Mt. Enon Association in Fla. and be enabled by God to speak before them with their Elders, Elder Stott, and Elder McCormick, last November. These two brothers were of much comfort to me and my wife during our visits with them before being received into the Soldier's Creek Church. It was during the meetings in Soldier's Creek Association that we heard some of those brethren from the Memphis Church and also Elder Cabbage and Elder Hendricks from the Powell Valley Association, Elder Griffin and Elder Brock from the Hopewell Association. We were blessed to visit the Powell Valley Association last September, where we had preciousely visited some of the churches there. Their preaching and manner of meeting with the love of God prevailing among them, had been of much comfort to me. Thank God for His wonderful works to the children of men! It was a joy for us to meet with the Hopewell Association in Alabama last October, where we met many from other parts of the country whom we did not previously know.

There is no way for me to express in words how I felt during the times that I

have visited with you and Elder Spangler and the churches in North Carolina, Maryland, and other places with those with whom you are in fellowship.

I must close for now and if the Lord has not been my redemption in deliverance from the world of darkness into the Kingdom of His dear son, then I am sorely deceived and am only a miserable wretch set up for the arrows of destruction and condemnation. I cannot deny His Grace, nor can I give up to the thought that there is no hope. I love the people that are called Old Baptist! Farewell for this time and Godspeed!

God be praised for all things!

In Hope,
Fred B. Neikirk

CONCERNING CHURCH ORDER

The order of the church consists not in any forms or ceremonial rites, but in the spirit of love to the Lord, and in one another. God is spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. Then the order of this spiritual house must consist in something more than a formal observance of duties which may be laid down in rules written on paper. The laws of Christ must be in the heart and the Spirit of Christ must direct every act of obedience in those who follow Him in the order He has appointed unto them.

Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10) Love is of God (John 4:7) This is the spirit in which every action must be performed to be in order which the Lord has commanded. In this spirit every action is in order. Without love all is out of order. Even though the letter of the law of Christ, as recorded in the New Testament, may have been followed in every particular in a case, instead of being in order, it is at best but mockery, if the motive for the action was anything but that love which seeks only

the glory of God and the good of the saints. How inexpressibly beautiful do the courts of Zion appear when the saints walk in this heavenly order and have the same care for one another. Then indeed it is manifest that we are members one of another.

Gilmer L. Williard

THE MAN-CHILD

Part II

"For unto us a child is born,
Unto us a son is given:" - Isa. 9:6A

In the previous installment of this text, I endeavored to measure the background of this prophecy and trace out for the household of faith both the historical and the experimental truth of Isaiah, who prophesied of the grace that should come in Messiah.

While the ancient people of God were in bitter bondage, (some seventy years of Babylonian captivity); nevertheless, they were not without hope of deliverance. And Isaiah, testifying beforehand the sufferings and glory of Christ, confirms the hope and aspiration of these suffering saints through the gospel.

I marvel at the beauty and wisdom of the gospel especially the intent and purpose for which it was ordained. Unlike the enemies of God who have packaged and commercialized its message; and who offer it for sale under the guise and pretext, and gimmickry of "Free Gift" to dead, alien, and unregenerate sinners, its message is directed to the "quickenened" family. Intended - not to regenerate but to enlighten (II Tim 1:10), not to offer salvation or a chance for it; but that He really and fully and absolutely accomplishes our salvation. In a word, the message of the gospel declares that the yoke of oppression and bondage is broken. Messiah is come to unlock the prison doors, loosen the two-leaved gates of iron, and set the captives free. Is there any wonder then that the ancient

people of God, upon hearing the prophets with liberty of breath and preaching this comforting message, rejoiced in praise and thanksgiving and said,

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth!"—Isa. 52:7

For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given. Some seven centuries must elapse before the fulfillment of the prophecy, but the eye of faith views it as though already happened. A child is born, a Son is given. The prophet speaks in the past tense. You see dear brethren, God sees things and declares them not as we see them, (as mortals we are creatures subject to time), and we err whenever we interpret and subject the creator and His works to fit into our framework of time. But God, declares the end from the beginning, and from ancient time the things that are not yet done, saying my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure (Isa. 46:9-10). With God, all things—past, present, and future—are forever settled and done. And may our God enable us to observe His works with the same mind.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."—Phil. 2:5

Now in our text, the prophet accentuates and heightens the mystery of the two natures of Christ. The child is born. This points to His humanity and humiliation. However, the Son is given and this points to His deity. He became the man servant.

"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

And being formed in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—Phil. 2:7, 8.

Oh my soul, what humiliation. A human sacrifice was prepared in the womb (Heb. 10:5) (Isa. 44:2). This Man-Child was ordained as the Sin-bearer.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."—II Cor. 5:14.

As it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached God fell on Jesus, the Sacrifice.

For unto us a child is born. This Man-Child must die for unto this end was he born. As the inspired writer declared, a time to be born, and a time to die (Eccl. 3:2). That which is born of the womb must die. While the child is born to die, the Second Person in this glorious unity cannot die for Deity is not subject to death. The one is ordained as the Sacrificial Lamb while the other upholds him in death and serves as the Stone for the Holy Altar.

“Upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail.”

The child that was born, and the Son that was given are two distinct natures but mysteriously in union and accord, emphatically united, that the death of the one is efficacious through the sanctification of the other.

In some hymn books, there is a phrase used in the singing, which we sometimes use (and I never did like the use of the phrase)—

“When God, the Mighty Maker died, For man the creature’s sin.”

Now the meaning of the poet might be good and perhaps he meant well, but it is an erroneous way of expressing the Divine truth that I have under consideration presently. Deity did not die, Deity could not die; but it was the man, the child of birth that died in covenant union with the Son that was given. Nevertheless, in all that he did and in all that he suffered, so close and mysterious is the union between the Divine and human natures that the blood spilled is declared to be the blood of God and infallibly secured, the salvation for those for whom it was intended.

“Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit.”
I Tim. 3:16A.

In conclusion, I will summarize on the other phrase: A Son is given. The prophet does not say, “unto us a Son is born.” The Son (His Divine nature) was

not born. As the Son, He has neither beginning of days nor end of life but rather abideth a priest continually (Heb. 7:3) and hath an unchangeable priesthood. He ever liveth to make intercession for them (Heb. 7:25B). He is the Eternal One, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit. As Son He was given and is thus styled in scripture as God’s unspeakable Gift. As the Son, He assumes all responsibility of dominion and rule, authority, and power. The government shall be upon His shoulder, and the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.

Thanks be unto God that we have a child that is born of woman, made like unto his brethren, and touched with the feeling of our infirmities. A Man-Child upheld and secured in the given Son. A union indissoluble and that never fadeth away. And because of His atonement we have an inheritance reserved in heaven and kept by the power of the “given Son.”

(Elder) Jack H. Dawsey

EDITORIAL

“There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it; Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. then said I, Wisdom is better than strength; nevertheless the poor wise man’s wisdom is disposed, and his words are not heard. The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war; but one sinner destroyeth much good. (Eccl. 9:14-18)

With much mixture of feeling I come, yet in my bosom lingers a precious hope

of knowing the city, the deliverance of the poor wise Man, the folly of my wisdom and my strength, what the city was delivered from, and the freedom to which the occupants of the city were delivered to. May we feel the warming influence of the Holy Spirit as we endeavor to glean in the garden of the Lord.

In the first place, none of those delivered, nor the things given them in the deliverance, will get any favorable notice from those without the city. To the contrary, although the beseiging king received a fatal bruising and minimizing of his power, he and the members of his corps of beseiging enemies are still alert in their endeavors to destroy the foundations of the city. Those in the city, together with the adornments of it, mean nothing to them; it is the poor wise Man's destruction that they first sought, and it remains the same today. The hatred and the rejection of the poor wise Man has been passed on to those that he has called to assail the city. (John 15:16· I John 3:1)

The smallness of the city, and the minority of numbers in it are utilized by the Holy Spirit to convey to us a comparison of the importance and power of the kingdom of heaven as compared to this kingdom of darkness. To God our Father, the Creator of the world, and the proficient creator and maker of all things, the city is His city. It is not a question of why does deliverance not come; it is not a looking for deliverance, because the question in their mind would be, How could a thing like that be? (Luke 1:34; John 3:9) For they all have, and will, make it manifest that the natural man receives not and knows not the things of the Spirit. No mortal mind could ever conjecture a host of people being delivered by standing still. No rational mind would ever think of a virgin bearing a son who had never known a man, and none of the intellect people would ever hint that a poor wise man, and a few men, could ever raise the

seige and onslaught of a great king with power and great weapons of warfare.

Of every member of the Israelitish host, every member of the crew of eight that sailed the flooding waters in Noah's day, and every member of the men in this little city, none expected deliverance. There was in each of the cases (as there is today when the little city is assailed, whether individual or collectively) members who have had to die to themselves as far as deliverance would ever be. This death is a sure to every one as it was to Mephibosheth at the King's table, or as it was to the dying thief on the cross. All, all must cease from their own works.

Have you felt the onslaughts against your trembling frame by this great king? Has the clash of the cutting and destroying of the two-edged sword caused you to shudder and to groan and even to beg for mercy? If these things have been yours to feel, you are on the way to heaven. It is your abode, and your Pilot is guiding you through the sea (troubles) of your life into a haven of rest.

Let us ponder the poor wise Man. He was immensely right; the world was His, and the fulness thereof bowed down in obeisance to Him. The deliverance of this little city was not to be by might nor power nor swiftness. It was declared (predestinated) long before the morning stars sang together, or the sons of God shouted for joy, and how that He rides on the storm, and makes the clouds the dust of His feet, or where He dwells. (Joel 3:17; Zeph. 3:17) It was in existence with the servant Elijah, and equally so in Paul's day, and will be just as precious and sought after by the true Israel of God in the evening of time. (Rom. 11:1-5; Heb. 13:8) No other city has been established on such a foundation; all other cities have been builded on the promises of men, and they all have fallen or will fall. This is the only city built on the wisdom and the power of God. God builds it and keeps it, and not

for the sake of any enemy, however formidable they may seem to be, has He ever left it to men to build or to the enemy's great bulwarks in its destruction. It shall stand forever.

Compared to cities of men's building and preservation, it is a little city; compared to men-made cities, it is the smallest, even in numerical strength, as well as in the demeanor of those called into it. (Deut. 7:7) It was referred to by our Saviour as a little flock. (Luke 12:32) It will be noticed that the Shepherd of this flock was pleased not only to have it denominated as the only flock that He had, but that it pleased Him to have it remain for all time as the little flock, and that He called into this city only a few men. Had it pleased Him to have had a numerically strong city, the beauty of the deliverance would have lost its savoriness. It would not have been astounding to men of nature, for the doctrines of men are all built on the false assumption that numbers is the identifying mark of the Kingdom of Heaven. Notice it carefully, dear reader. It was a little city, and just a few men in it. All the powers of God were engaged in the preservation of the ark of our shadowing character that reaches all the way back to the morning of time. Noah was the guiding creator; measuring it all out, putting every piece of material in place, getting it ready for occupancy before it was occupied, and when ready, only his family was called into it. Equally so, no more, no less, only those chosen for preservation in a covenant of grace before the foundation of the world will ever be found dwelling therein. Furthermore, the listing of those whose citizenship is in this city were entered there in eternity. The mathematician that can tell us how old this world is can tell us how long their names have been inscribed in the Builder's book. Every one of these few were written in the Book of Life before the world had a beginning. There has been no erasure nor an addition from

that remote day of writing. Only those whose names were then written therein will ever worship God or feel the cleansing effects of His blood or sing the song of deliverance. All others will join hands with the vanquished king and will be found trying to man some of the mighty weapons of warfare that will never make a dent in the ship of Zion nor will ever rob the poor wise Man of His glory.

What does this mean to us? How does it concern us today? Do we have a place in the divine picture of the redeemed hosts of the Lord? Certainly so. The text has been in the sacred archives long before they were set in modern print. The truth in the text has been the basis of every gospel message down through the ages. In the mind and the purpose of Jehovah God the city was set up from all eternity, but made manifest in time by the appearing of Jesus Christ in every assembly gathered together for the worship of Him. People have been in the city down through the ages. They have longed to cross out of the wilderness into the inner courts of the city since time immemorial, and the borders of the city, the royal subjects therein, and most of all, the seeing of guiding hand of the poor wise Man delivered from His poverty into the glory of a crucified and redeeming Saviour has been viewed in awe and wonder. Me thinks, as I have been separated from nativity, as was Father Abraham, that I have seen with him, by eyes of triumphant faith, His day and have been glad indeed of the sight.

However, it has not all been rapture; it has not all been joy. A feeling of despondency has often been the lot of one and all. A threat of being expelled from the city has been ours to feel, and oftentimes abject sorrow has flooded our souls, as the Sun of righteousness was hid from our view. (Isa. 45:15) Murmurers have asked, If He is thus such a Deliverer, why does He allow sorrow? They know not what they

speak. If no danger was ever felt by the occupants of the city, what would the deliverance of the poor wise Man mean to us? This felt danger cometh not by accident nor by observation. The tribulations that assail the feeble flock were as much a part of the deliverance as the deliverance itself. One would not have come, nor would it have been needed, had not the other come. Let us remember the poor wise Man, how that all things, even adversity in its deepest die, are interwoven into the robe of righteousness so intricately that none can weave it, nor put it on save it first be woven for us, and we be given the right to wear it, and the Bridegroom put it on us.

No fault will then be found in the poor man. His wisdom will not be challenged. His delivering hand will not be shortened in the hour of deliverance. There will be nothing lacking; there will be no ifs or buts, or other conjunctions raised about the deliverance. The goodness and the beauty of it belongs right now. It is not in heaven, but is all found in heavenly places in Christ Jesus our Lord. Our business lies at wisdom's gate; our occupation and our conversation is in heaven, and we are hastening hither, walking in and on the highway that the wisdom of our glorious Benefactor built for the occupants of His city to walk in and over. If walking and traveling the highway they are not telling smutty yarns, they are not exposing the errors of fellow travelers, they are not making brethren an offender for a word, they are not engaged in things like unto that. They are talking and speaking oft to one another about the glory of the Kingdom and the power of His saving and deliverance.

In our personal experience the beginning of the siege against the city will never be forgotten. No enemy caused a dark cloud to enter the horizon of the bounds of our vision. That our citadel was subject to attack had never entered our mind, but if it had I felt sure

and I am persuaded that my readers felt fully capable of warding off any attack that could be made against our residing place. But unexpectedly, and thus catching us unprepared, an unlooked for attack came. I was challenged, and I had no answer; the standing of my dwelling was called in question. The building began to quake and tremble. There was no safety except what I could provide, and I couldn't provide the first preliminary defense. I fled to Sinai and the fiery indignation of He whose fiery consumption left all of my building material in flames. I had thought it good; I had laid it up for a day like unto that, but it was consumed as chaff in the purging of the floor. (Matt. 3:12)

Yes, I too had never known the wise Man. I, too, had never heard and listened to His voice. The reason for this was that I had not needed Him. I had plenty to trade and traffic in, and, like my counterparts now scattered in the universe, I thought that my offerings were certainly beneficial to the perpetuation of His affairs, and I did not anticipate any trouble along that line. But how deluded I was. As the seige of that hemmed-in starving grew more intense, the more my concern became that, plug holes as I might, our hiding place would fall to the ravaging power of the great King.

The scenes and feelings of fifty-four years ago become more realistic again as I spend time in reminiscing over the deliverance that I felt to hope then, and still feel to hope, is of the Lord. Ah, the gloom of soul that these few men (as compared to those that are in the seige against the city) always have felt when they had not yet been made acquainted with He who works in a quaint and mysterious and out of date manner. There is no deliverance. They do not look for any. In this deplorable condition, whether it is when we are in the besieged city or when we are on the sea of destruction, we are brought to our wits end. (Psa. 107:27) In the outset we could

steer our fragile barque in any troubled waters; in the beginning of the seige we could handle any situation. He was despised and rejected by us, as by all natural men; His wisdom and His strength was not needed. But dear brethren, dear sisters, dear readers, one and all, every storm ends in a calm. God raises storms that His glory might be magnified. He brings our strength to a nonetity that His strength might be known. The words of this poor wise Man is only heard in quietude. No one would expect quietness to come from within he or she that is about to perish, therefore the seige is broken by He that has all power in heaven and in earth; the storm itself is made a calm; it is made in solitude and in quietude, and then he or she hears the words of His wisdom and His delivering voice; the same words that before the storm arose, before the seige was started, were without power, and without wisdom, now become the wisdom that gives peace and joy and deliverance to fools that one time thought to rule.

(Elder) W. D. Griffin

WITHDRAWN FELLOWSHIP

“My precious Brethren, these are but a few of the reasons why our Particular Covenanted Baptist Church in Canada has WITHDRAWN FELLOWSHIP from your Pastor, Elder D. V. Spangler, the Board of Directors and the Associate Editors of the *Signs of the Times* according to the commands of Paul in Ephesians 5:11 and in 2 Thessalonians 3:6”.

From page 5, letter of Elder Stewart McColl, addressed to “The Pastor, The Deacons and The Members, Dan River Primitive Baptist Church, N.C. Highway No. 700, U.S.A., Route 2, Ruffin, N.C. 27320: dated R.R. #4, Appin, Ontario, Canada, NOL 1AO, February 26, 1981”.

The language is plain enough that no

explanation seems necessary.

Editors

Listed as follows are the Trustees and Editors referred to above:

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OBITUARIES

CHARLES HUGH GOTT

According to the will of an all wise and merciful God, our precious Brother, Charles H. Gott, was called from this life November 16, 1980. He was born April 15, 1930, in Putnam County, W.V. He was the son of Hugh and Oma Gott.

Brother Gott carried a precious hope in his breast for many years, and on July 17, 1977, he was blessed to ask for a home with the Hopewell Primitive Baptist church while at the waters edge on Leading Creek as two others were led into the watery grave. It was my blessed privilege to administer the ordinance of baptism on that day at his

request.

He was burdened to speak of the goodness of God's grace, love, and mercy to His chosen people and was quickly granted permission to preach within the bounds of the Pocatolico Association and this privilege was extended to all churches with whom we correspond on December 3, 1977.

His expression of God's love was sweetly felt within as he spoke, whether it was from the pulpit or in conversation in his home that was always open to his brethren. To know him was to love him and this was evidenced by the many comforting messages and expressions of sympathy received from coast to coast. We feel it can be said of him, "Well done, good and faithful servant".

On December 24, 1953, he was married to Patsy Slater, who along with the family patiently cared for him during a lingering illness.

He leaves to mourn his wife, Patsy; one daughter, Sharlee; his Mother, Orma; one sister, Lucinda; two grandchildren, and a host of friends.

Funeral services were conducted by Elder Willard Bird and Elder V. B. Linn at the Gaten Funeral Home at Poca, W.V. on November 18, 1980. He was laid to rest in the McClanahan Cemetery to await his Heavenly Father's call in that glorious resurrection.

Elder V. B. Linn

BROTHER NOEL J. DALTON

It pleased our Heavenly Father to remove from our midst Brother Noel J. Dalton on Oct. 9, 1980 in Roanoke Hospital at age 74. He was born in Pittsylvania County on April 1, 1906 the son of the late Robert Dalton and Octovia Dalton.

He leaves to mourn his passing one brother, Tillman K. Dalton of Vinton, Va.

Brother Noel was received into the fellowship of Weatherford Primitive Baptist church on April 14, 1974 and was baptized by his beloved pastor, Elder O. K. Tench on April 28, 1974. He was faithful to attend his meeting but had been unable to attend for some time.

Funeral services were conducted at Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church on October 11, 1980 by his pastor, Elder O. K. Tench and Elder Leonard Brammer.

His body was laid to rest in the Church Cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers.

Brother Noel will be greatly missed by his family and brethren and friends. May we all be reconciled to God's will.

Written by: Marvin Brumfield

Moderator: O. K. Tench

Clerk: L. H. Doss

ROSA HARRELL

We, Old Sparta Primitive Baptist Church, deeply feel the loss of our friend and sister, Rosa Harrell. The Lord called her Spirit home on September 10, 1980.

She was born to the late Wesley Owens and Katie Bridgers on September 20, 1897 in Edgecombe County, making her stay on this earth 83 years. She was married on January 7, 1914, to the late Brother Thomas Harrell. To this union was born 6 children. Two daughters preceded her in death leaving three daughters: Sister Agnes Hathaway, Box 170, Macclesfield, N.C.; Mrs. Beulah Deans, Macclesfield, N.C.; Mrs. Beatrice Owens, Wilson, N.C.; and one son, Lane Harrell, Rocky mount, N.C.

Sister Harrell united with the Church at Old Sparta in April, 1927, and was blessed to be a humble and faithful Sister for 53 years and 4 months. She will be missed by her family, friends, and her church. She attended meetings whenever possible. She was a beloved member and a devoted mother. She had much sufferings and afflictions to bear and bore them patiently.

Funeral services were held at Carlisle Chapel by her Pastor, Elder Joe Sawyer, assisted by Elder Henry Jones. She was laid to rest in Macclesfield Cemetery, beside Brother Harrell, under a mound of beautiful flowers and in the presence of a host of friends and relatives.

Old Sparta Church extends deepest sympathy to the family and friends.

May she rest in peace.

Be it resolved: Three copies of this Resolution be made: one for Church record, one for *Signs of the Times* for publication and one to be sent to her family.

Done by order of Conference 4th Saturday in September, 1980.

Elder Joe Sawyer, Moderator
Gladys Edwards, Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65 Keeling, Va. 24566

**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 6/81
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

FIFTH SUNDAY MEETING
DAN RIVER PRIMITIVE
BAPTIST CHURCH

The Lord willing, a fifth Sunday meeting will be held at Dan River Primitive Baptist Church, near Mayfield, N.C., Sunday, May 31, 1981, beginning at 10:00 A.M.

The meeting, though being held at Dan River, will be participated in by a number of other independent churches.

An invitation is extended to ministers, brethren, and friends to meet with us.

Elder D. V. Spangler
Pastor, Dan River
Church

EZEKIEL 37:15-17

"The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions; and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand".

Let us now consider what has gone before in the preceeding chapters of this book of Ezekiel and see if we, by the grace of God, might see the continuity of the word and covenant of God. Yes, even from the beginning unto the end. In the preceeding chapters the Lord has appeared unto Ezekiel and taught him of the false shepherds; teaching him of

the shepherds who do not feed the flock, but instead feed themselves. In Chapter 34, verse 8 He says, "As I live, saith the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord;" Can we not see in the world today those who, in name only, feed the sheep but actually are feeding themselves? Yea, they feed on providential gain for themselves, they feed upon the weakness of the poor and needy, the widows and the orphans, and any others that will listen to them. Yea, they glory in high living not only providentially, but they glory in their own pride, vanity, and self-righteousness. They are trying to be recognized by man and even trying to leave a legacy for themselves after death. Is it not a sad thing when we see in our churches today these very things happening? Would it not have been sad if the Lord our God had left things right there and there would never have been any other type of shepherd? I trust herein lies the true sweetness of the text of this matter. When He came in the word again to Ezekiel saying, "Take thee one stick for Judah and take thee one stick for Joseph", I believe He was pointing to the great Shepherd to come, yea, the chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and the two sticks represent first the old covenant, and the new covenant.

The taking of the two sticks in Ezekiel's hand was a type and shadow of the power invested in the hand of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; our Saviour who was yet to come and who fulfilled the old covenant to a jot and a tittle and who was and is the new covenant sure and steadfast. Ah yes, when Ezekiel was given instructions to take the two sticks in one hand and they became one, it was just as Jesus Christ fulfilled the old covenant and is the new

covenant fulfilled to a jot and a tittle. Yea, just as sure as the curtain of time was raised, just that sure will every bit of the new covenant be, and in the mind and purpose of God has already been fulfilled according to His own good will and pleasure. Even though Judah and Joseph were both Jews, I believe that the two sticks also represent both the Jew and the Gentile. Why? He says the stick of Judah shall have the children of Israel for his companions. Yes, the natural Jew, the unbelieving Jew, and all the Adamic race of unbelievers because he said that Joseph for his companions would have all the house of Israel. Did not Jesus say, "All that claim to be of Israel are not of Israel"? Does not the all of the house of Israel embrace the same all as was in the election and adoption of His children? In John 10:16 He says, "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold". In Joshua 14:4 He says, "The children of Joseph were two tribes". Not only did the Lord show Ezekiel the false shepherd, but also showed to him the duty of a good shepherd and the power invested in the great Shepherd.

Here we have come through three or four chapters of the Bible relating to the shepherds, both good and bad. Can you not see that in speaking of a chief shepherd that surely there must be under shepherds? Can you not see the power of God manifested before the very eyes of the Prophet when the dry bones assembled themselves and yea, were even covered with flesh, then skin and new life came into them. Now, can you believe for one moment that there would be a shepherd, or any necessity for one without there being a flock of sheep for him to attend? Just as sure as you live the sheep were there and will continue to be there for all time and eternity. Can you not see that the power of God was being manifested before the very eyes of Ezekiel and that power being shown to be placed in the hands of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ? Wouldn't it have

been sad if the Lord had left it right here? The continuity of the workings of Almighty God does not stop here. These two sticks, Oh, how powerful they are.

To continue the working of the two sticks let us look yet to another incident; that of the cross - two sticks. Yes, the cross of Calvary was composed of two sticks, and the Lord and Saviour was given power over the cross. He says, "They take not my life from me, but I lay down my life" for my sheep. Yea, the same all of the house of Israel spoken about some 570 years or more before to Ezekiel is the same people, His children, His sheep, for which He had laid down His life. He said, "I know my sheep. I call them by name and they do follow me".

To continue on, we find more sticks placed in the hands of the Saviour. Was not love and mercy of God embraced in those two sticks? Aren't you glad that God in His mercy shed His love upon us even before we ever were? And that our hope lies in the sweetness of the fact that God in His time and in His way shows us a little glimpse of the sweetness, if only for a little season. Aren't you glad to believe in, and have a hope in, a God that would not put His people here without a shepherd and that He would have prepared a sanctuary for them. Oh, No! He did not prepare a bed of roses here in this life, but He did prepare a place in the life to come, as we continue on to place the sticks in His hand. We now have the old covenant and the new covenant; and we have the Jew and the Gentile embraced therein. We have the cross of Calvary and we have His love and mercy. You would think that sufficient, but oh, no; we find embraced in the two sticks death and the grave, and thanks be unto God, the same power over death and the grave is in the hand of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. How sad it would have been if He had to wait until some man made up his mind to help Him out of the grave. How sad to think that the world believes God can go

only so far and the rest is up to man to accept or reject. Can you not see the power of God in the triumph over death and the grave? Wouldn't it be sad if it were left right there?

The Saviour was given yet another two sticks, the power to ascend into the heavens and to come again to receive His own. Yes, at His appointed time He will return once again to receive His own and to raise them up to be forever with Him in heaven and immortal glory. We can only say that truth and justice was given into His hand at the very same instance. Yea, all power, both in heaven and in earth was given him. Does your hope not lie in the belief that in the last day, when He has triumphed over the last of His enemies, which is death, that He will make manifest to His people that they truly are sheep and not goats. The Shepherd and the under-shepherds were sent to feed the sheep and not to make sheep out of goats. The sheep will be gathered on the right hand and the goats on the left. The sheep will hear the words, "Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". As the Psalmist said, "In my father's house are many mansions". Notice that it says there are many mansions. May each of you rest in the hope of this power is my prayer.

(Elder) B. J. McLaughlin

Kernesville, N.C.

UNITY AMONG THE BRETHREN

I desire so much to see all of the Primitive Baptist that love each other, and that stand for discipline and order as practiced by the Apostles show godly sorrow and be humble enough to forgive their brethren for their trespasses and mistakes and take down their bars that have been set up by men to divide lovely brethren. It is wrong, and if we could be blessed to thoroughly examine ourselves and see what we are by nature, and what we must be by the grace of God

to inherit the kingdom of God; we would be willing and glad to forgive our brethren if we have the love of God in our hearts. There will never be any peace among the Primitive Baptist as long as bars are set up to divide them. I understand that there are some claiming to be Primitive Baptists that are going from place to place sowing seeds of discord among the brethren. Some of them are going under the title of an elder. If they had the love of God in their hearts they would be striving for peace instead of discord. The scripture teaches us to mark them that cause division among us and avoid them. Brethren, why can't we live together in peace? Christ said, "Little children, love one another as I have loved you." If we forgive not our brother for his trespasses, neither will our Heavenly Father forgive us for ours in this world or in the world to come.

Therefore we should be careful not to offend one of God's little ones. I hope that I love God's little ones wherever they are.

I desire your prayers and may God bless us to strive for peace.

Gilmer L. Williard

COMMENT

If we understand Brother Williard correctly, we endorse his view that many of the bars that exist among us should come down. We, personally, know of good brethren who are apart and can give *not one* reason for it, except that to risk fellowship with those they are divided from might bring censure from theirs, or sister Associations. Brethren, these things ought not to exist. Had we not rather obey God than men?

Our ranks are getting thin. Have we been biting and devouring one another? (Gal. 5:15) See James 4:1, 11; I Pet. 2:21-23; I John 3:11-16.

One of the peculiar things about divisions and bars among us is that very

often the parties that set up bars are in some manner guilty of the very things over which they first (supposedly) raised their bars.

We contend that churches ought not recognize *any* bar of fellowship unless and until the complaining party can clearly show that the accused party has violated the commands of our Lord as contained in the gospel, and further that the complaining party has exhausted all scriptural means to gain back the accused party.

These are the brief views of only one of the Editors of the *Signs of the Times* and should not be understood otherwise. We feel strongly, however, that this is the decided view of the great majority of our brethren everywhere.

We would be glad to hear the view of other brethren on this point.

(Elder) James F. Poole

MR. HUNTINGTON'S EXPLANATION OF Hebrews 6:4-8

Our correspondent having redeemed his pledge to send us Mr. Huntington's explanation of Heb. 6:4-8, we have the pleasure of now inserting it. We believe it is one of "The Epistles of Faith". And we must say that we never read any explanation of the passage so convincing and so satisfactory. The Doctor has handled the subject like a master in Israel, and, in his usual felicitous way, has combined brevity and fulness, strength with clearness scripture with experience, and faithfulness with tenderness.

The Editors of The Gospel Standard
Sir,--I received yours, and, in compliance with your request, I send you my thoughts upon the subject; but at the same time I must inform you, that none but God can give you an answer of peace. The priest's lips are to keep knowledge, and we are to require the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. (Mal. 2:7) This great High Priest, Prophet, and Apostle of our profession is the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom we are to go, and of whom we are to seek wisdom. He giveth liberally, and

upbraideth not; and there is none that teacheth like him. But now for the words: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened". A man may be enlightened, as Balaam was, who saw the vision of the Almighty, whilst in a trance, having his eyes open. The Lord came to him first at Pethor; and he afterwards saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand. He saw likewise the safety of Israel under the blessing of God and his counsel, and that God was not a changeable Being. He saw that Israel should never be reckoned among the nations, but remain a distinct people, even when dispersed throughout the world. He saw the destruction of Amalek, etc., and the blessed death of the righteous, and wished that his last end might be like theirs. The eye of a man's understanding is one thing, and the eye of faith is another. By the former, the rich man in hell saw Abraham afar off, saints are assured of their interest in partakers of the Holy Ghost in no other and embraced them. By the former, a man sees the blessed state of others; by the latter, he sees his own state. Balaam saw God for others, but not for himself. Job says, "I shall see him for myself, and not for another". Balaam never saw the desperate evil that there is in sin, nor the spirituality of the law, nor the Lord as a Saviour, but as an angry Judge with a drawn sword, in which character every eye shall see him in the great day. The Lord shone into Balaam's head, he shone into Paul's heart. He opened the eyes of Balaam, but he opened the heart of Lydia. Balaam saw a sword; Paul saw an atonement. Balaam saw a Judge; Paul saw a Saviour. Balaam and the Egyptians saw God for Israel; Job saw God for himself.

If thou art enlightened, thou hast seen sin; but hast thou ever seen and felt the killing evil of sin? Thou hast been enlightened to see the word, which is a

light shining in a dark place, but has the day dawn and day star arisen in thy heart? If enlightened, thou hast seen the spirituality of the law; but hast thou seen and felt the dreadful havock it makes by working wrath in the conscience? and have the sight and sense of this made thee flee to Christ for refuge, in whose face we see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God? If the light of faith shines into a man's heart, whatever that man sees, he applies sooner or later. By faith he sees the promises, and by faith he applies them. By faith he comes to Christ, and by faith he receives him. He views the atonement, and pardon is the effect of the vision. Imputed righteousness is revealed, and peace is the fruit of it as soon as applied. Eternal life is the gift of God, and by the gospel it is brought to light. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself"; faith applies the word of reconciliation, while friendship and fellowship are felt and enjoyed.

"And have tasted the heavenly gift". By this is meant, not Christ, nor eternal life, nor the gift of faith, nor repentance, for the gifts and calls of God are without repentance, but I think a spiritual gift such as the Corinthians were zealous of (I Cor. 14:12) is chiefly intended, a gift of prophecy, or a ministerial gift to preach, attended with a reformation, zeal, and a gift of utterance, which things have a relish in them for a carnal heart; yea, the possessor of this gift tastes a sweetness in it because it procures much applause from men, which is the sweetest morsel that can be given to an unrenewed, unhumiliated man. He delights in his gift because it procures him the praise of men; he tastes the former, and fills his belly with the latter, for he loves the praise of men more than the praise of God. But this tasting differs widely from what is called eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, which is peculiar to believers, and it is by this they live for ever.

“And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost”. Not that the Holy Ghost ever took possession of their hearts, so as to become a spring of living water there; for the above-mentioned persons were not partakers of eternal life; nor had they received the first fruits of the spirit; neither had the testimony of the Spirit been applied to their conscience, nor his grace to their hearts; nor had they received the impression of his ratifying, confirming, sealing power, by which the saints are assured of their interest in Christ. These things accompany salvation, and are the first fruits, pledges, and earnest of future glory. The characters here named are made partakers of the Holy Ghost in no other sense than was Balaam or Saul; the Spirit of God came upon them both, and they both prophesied. This is a spiritual gift; and there are divers spiritual gifts, but all of the Holy Spirit. It is he that divides them to every man severally as he will. He gave utterance both to Saul and Balaam, and it was by him they spoke and prophesied. (I Cor. 12)

“And have tasted the good word of God”. As Herod, who heard John gladly; and the Jews, who rejoiced in his light for a season; and the wayside hearers, who hear the word, and anon with joy received it. They were pleased with the sound, amazed at the light and understanding of the preacher, admired the fluency of his speech, and were charmed with the heavenly tidings brought forth; and all this time they found no opposition, either from the law, conscience, Satan, or the carnal enmity of their own hearts, to these things; therefore, they received the word with joy, and sprang up into a warm, zealous, joyful profession. But when temptations and persecutions came because of the word, they withered away as fast as they sprang up, which fulfills the saying of the wise man: “An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, but the end thereof shall not be blessed”. It is not enough to taste the good word of

God. Ezekiel ate the roll, John ate the little book; Jeremiah found the word and ate it, and it was to him the rejoicing of his heart. “My word,” says Christ, “is spirit, and my word is life”. But he says to the Jews, “I know you that my word hath no place in you”; it is not in your heart, affections and conscience. They did not receive the truth in the love of it, nor the love of the truth, and therefore it is no wonder if strong delusions are sent, and they are given up to believe a lie. In short, these persons could have no more than a natural faith, and as to their joy, it sprang from natural affections; for the love of God, the root of the matter, they had not; it was for want of this root that they withered away.

“And the powers of the world to come”. By this I understand the power of working miracles. There were in those days numbers of persons who had spiritual gifts of healing, working miracles, speaking with tongues, etc., and the Saviour tells us that many will say unto him in that day, “We have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works”, but these he will never own as his people. It is not what man does for God that saves him, but what God does for man; not man’s wonderful works, but God’s free grace. This power of working miracles may be called “the powers of the world to come” because it is a divine power, sent from heaven and from God himself, who displays his power and glory there; and by these wonderful works he displays his power on earth. These miracles produce amazement, astonishment, and wonder in those who see them performed, on which account they may be called “the powers of the world to come”; for in that world everything will appear miraculous, wonderful, and astonishing beyond all conception. Moreover, it was common among the Jews in days of old to call the days of the Messiah “the world to come”; and Isaiah foretold many wonderful things

of a miraculous nature that were to be performed by the Messiah, such as making the lame to leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing. These miraculous operations were by the Jews called the powers of the world to come; and these miracles were wrought by many who will not be saved, as I have before shown. True joy springs from the manifestation of Christ in the heart: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you". This manifestation produces pardon and peace, the experience of which worketh hope, and the soul rejoices in hope of the glory of God; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, which is the root of all real joy.

My dear sir, did you ever know what it was to abhor yourself in dust and ashes? Did you ever mourn in private under a sense of your lost estate, and the wrath to which sin hath exposed you? Were you ever bowed down under the intolerable burden of guilt, and the fear of death? If this ever was your case, to whom did you apply? How did you get rid of your troubles, or where did you leave your burden? Christ says, "I will give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." If this is your experience, your joy is the joy of the Lord. The faith of those who for a while believed, sprang from a conviction in the mind of the supernatural power of Christ, as displayed in his miracles. "When they saw the miracles that he did, many believed in him;" but when those performances were over, their natural convictions sank, and as persecutions attended their profession, their natural conscience failed, and they fell away. The faith of God's elect purifies the heart, by bringing the atonement home; it lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, and puts it on; it leads the soul to Jesus, and works by love to him; it attends prayer, and brings answers from God; it is very busy

under a sermon; it mixes faith with the word, and applies the promises; while God fills the soul with joy and peace in believing. In short, if thou art a real believer, thou hast had a share of persecution and temptation, to try thy faith, as well as they; and, if these have not withered thy profession, it is a plain proof that thy faith is not natural. Farewell.

I remain, thy willing servant,
W. H.

The Gospel Standard
August 1843

A COMMENTARY ON THE LIFE OF SISTER MAUD TRUITT LAWS

Ordinarily, the record of one's life and the details thereof are written in the form of an obituary, after the subject has departed this life and gone to his eternal destiny. On this day, February 8, 1981, I would, if the Lord will guide my pen, write such a treatise concerning a precious sister who is very much alive, alert, and reasonably active. The subject is our beloved Sister Maud T. Laws, who as of this day has lived in this world one hundred and one (101) years.

As one who has known and been associated with her rather intimately, I would testify to the assertion that her life has been and is more than remarkable. By any standards, it has been extraordinary.

Sister Maud, as we lovingly call her, was born on February 8, 1880, the daughter of Elisha Sampson and Della Powell Truitt, near Powellville, Wicomico County, Maryland. As a child she attended the local school and after the family moved to Salisbury, she attended and graduated from Wicomico High School. On October 3, 1910, she married Victor H. Laws with Elder Thomas M. Poulson officiating, and from this marriage, a daughter, Margaret (Mrs. George) Engle and a

son, Victor H. Laws, Jr., were born. On August 30, 1946, after nearly thirty-six years of a remarkably happy marriage, their life together was terminated by his death. She has also three devoted grandsons and one granddaughter.

Sister Maud is a very gracious, loving person, and she is surrounded by a most devoted family who counts it a privilege to minister unto her. Her many brethren as well as her present and former pastors hold her in the very highest esteem and although she has outlived just about all of her contemporaries, she has an almost innumerable host of friends, old and young, who treasure her friendship. She truly is an inspiration to many people of all ages and we who have known her so long and so well feel deeply grateful for having been closely associated with her.

But it is not so much Sister Maud's natural qualities, lovely as they are, that I would stress. It is rather of the mighty work wrought within her that I would speak, to the end that He who wrought this great work might be exalted.

Early in life, Sister Maud was blest "to know whom she believed" and to discern between false doctrine and the doctrine of salvation by and through the sacrificial offering of the Saviour of sinners. Around the time of her 26th birthday, she became deeply burdened to confess her Lord to the Church and before men and to cast her lot with them "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt" (the world). She has told me many times that her burden became so heavy that she felt she would die if she continued to tarry. Accordingly, on Saturday afternoon, July 28, 1906, she spoke to the Church at Salisbury, of which her father was a member, asking for an abiding place with them. She related a touching account of the Lord's work within her

and she was joyfully received. At this time her mother also asked for a home in the church and was received, and together they were baptized by Elder Silas H. Durand, pastor of the Church at Salisbury.

This memorable event came to pass nearly seventy-five years ago and although she was an attractive and popular young girl of a rather prominent family and undoubtedly had many friends in the more popular churches and probably many temptations, she never for one small moment wavered in "the faith once delivered to the saints" or desired to abandon her affiliation to follow the popular crowd.

Through the years, Sister Maud served the Church at Salisbury at Clerk, as Treasurer, and as a good counsellor. For many years she was clerk of our Association. She was made joyfully thankful when, in July, 1971, her beloved son, Victor, Jr., asked to be and was joyfully received as a member of the Church at Salisbury and baptized by our beloved former pastor, Elder David V. Spangler, Brother Victor was appointed to the office of deacon soon after his reception into the Church. He is an excellent counsellor not only at law but also as a deacon, serving judiciously and as his mother always did, striving for peace. All of us feel very deeply that Margaret, the daughter, is one of us. We firmly believe she loves the truth and its blessed Author, as well as the Church and Her glorious head.

Sister Maud, although her physical hearing is greatly impaired by reason of age, looks forward eagerly to the meetings, and unless she is ill or the weather extreme, she is there. One of her greatest pleasures is in mingling with the brethren and speaking together of the things "most surely believed among us". I recall the many, many sweet visits both in my home and in her beautiful home, whose doors have always opened wide to her brethren and friends. Our

theme was always Jesus - His humiliation, His exaltation, and "His great love wherewith He loved us". The theme of themes!!

I think Sister Maud's most outstanding attributes are love and compassion. A brother recently told a friend that if Sister Maud had an acquaintance who had ninety-five faults and five virtues, she would stress the five and minimize the ninety-five. Another is her contending for peace - peace in the Church, peace in her family, and elsewhere.

A number of outstanding ministers have served the Church at Salisbury during the period of Sister Maud's membership, the first being Elder Silas H. Durand, then Elder Aaron B. Francis, Elder J. Corder Mellott, Elder G. Edwin Coulbourne, Elder David V. Spangler, Elder W. D. Griffin, and presently Elder James F. Poole. Her memory is excellent for her age and she can remember and at times has entertained in her home many of the spiritual stalwarts of our faith and order, such as Elder William Beebe, Elder F. A. Chick, Elders George and Joseph Staton, Elder Silas H. Durand, Elder Eubanks, Elder Horace Lefferts, and others whose names I cannot at the moment recall. Most of these, or a least some of them took part in the momentous division between the Old School or Primitive and the New School or Missionary persuasions.

I may be mistaken, but at least so far as I know, Sister Maud Laws is the only one of our people living today who has lived to reach this age and to have been a member of the church so many years. I might add that there are comparatively few who have lived a more fruitful life than she. Long after she will have departed this life, the memory of her steadfast faith, her clear testimony, and her Christian character will stand as a monument to the mercy and grace of God so freely bestowed on His people. Far, far better such a memorial than

any multi-thousand dollar structure of stone or marble that man can erect and which will "perish with the using". Far, far more to be desired the heritage she will leave for her children and grandchildren than a vast fortune consisting of houses and lands, stocks and bonds, or silver and gold, which can and may vanish in a moment of time.

In conclusion, I most emphatically repeat that it is not Sister Maud whom I would revere and extol, dear as she is, nor would she want me to. It is "Christ in her, the Hope of glory." Hallowed forever and forever by His dear Name!

Written at the request of our dear pastor, Elder James F. Poole, by a sister to whom Sister Maud Laws is very dear.

Mildred V. Dykes

708 N. Casa Grande Circle
Duncanville, Texas 75116

February 4, 1981

THE HORNET

"And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites, but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow."

--Joshua 24:12

Some critics enjoy calling many of the preacher brethren "extreme" on the doctrine of predestination merely because these ministers are neither afraid nor ashamed to say publicly that God predestinated and controls the whereabouts and activities of chiggers, fleas, flies, gnats, blades of grass, and fallen leaves. These critics have devoted much time and effort to speculating about where God's predestination begins and ends (as if predestination were a timely thing with a beginning or an end) and whether or not God's knowing about something before it happens is really about all there is to predestination.

Now, dear reader, please think about this for a moment: Shall semi-predestinarians be allowed to speculate and we not? Shall their speculation be

permissible while our speculation must be labeled too speculative? (What is meant by "semi-predestinarian" is this: "Semi-", Webster says, means, "approximately half, partly, not more than half, in low degree, only partly, incompletely." Thus a semi-predestinarian would be the one who is "partly" or approximately--but not more than half--predestinarian. We have all met him. He is the one who says he believes God just predestinated the good things.) Well, what is about to be advanced here is not nearly as speculative as a semi-predestinarian's speculating about what is important enough for God to predestinate and what is so unimportant that God will not predestinate it. The semi-predestinarian critics attack God Himself with their speculations, while the speculations herein will be confined, we trust, to speculating about the conclusions of the semi-predestinarian's speculations.

First, then, is there not cause to wonder if the critics genuinely think it is any more difficult for God to send a chigger crawling up someone's leg nowadays than it was for Him to turn the Egyptian dust into lice in the day of Moses, or for Him to drive out the Canaanites by sending the hornet before Joshua's troops? Indeed, where does the insignificant end and the significant begin? What is important and what is unimportant in this life? Who is to judge, and how are we to know in any given circumstance? Condemned murderers, escaping for their very lives into the Everglades, have been driven back into the waiting arms of the law, not by bloodhounds and shotguns, but by mosquitoes and chiggers. A person could die from the accumulated poison of too many chigger bites or mosquito bites. Some people have died from the stings of bees, wasps and hornets which other people would consider "insignificant." God has appointed each person's time to die; will God consider the details of that death too insignifi-

cant to bother about?

But, if God cannot or does not control chiggers (according to the semi-predestinarian's theory) and man certainly cannot control them, then it is very doubtful that angels or devils control them, either. We know that, when given leave by God to do so, devils sometimes control hogs, because of what they did in the case of the demoniac of Gadara; but the critics, bless their hearts, would no doubt say hogs are far more important than chiggers. Being big and important as hogs are, the semi-predestinarian critic would figure God and devils could control hogs, but God would not waste his time controlling a chigger or a hornet, because He is too busy running what the semi-predestinarian considers to be the "important" things and the "good" things in the universe.

The situation reduces to this, then: If the semi-predestinarian's theory is correct, then either chiggers must control themselves or else they must go uncontrolled. But, if either of these positions were correct, there would immediately be serious trouble in the universe.

Suppose it were true that God did not control chiggers and that chiggers controlled themselves. Just for a moment's speculation (we are entitled to it, as we have long endured the speculations of semi-predestinarians), suppose that these chiggers in control of themselves, poison and all, all attacked a man several years before his time to die had come; and they attacked him in sufficient numbers to poison him to death or at least make him scratch himself to death? There would be nothing to prevent millions of chiggers in full control of themselves from killing multitudes of people before their time, would there? For, what could stop them? If you cannot stand on a mountain-side and stop one boulder from rolling over you, how can you control an avalanche of millions of boulders? The problem is the same with the chiggers: If one

chigger cannot be controlled, what is to stop millions of them? All of which would mean that chiggers, billions of chiggers, as "insignificant" as they are individually, could nevertheless collectively cause people to die before their time. This would lead to the conclusion that a man's appointed time to die is very insignificant indeed, less significant than a chigger, if God's appointment could be thrown off schedule by something too insignificant for God to be concerned about while He was busy controlling "the good things" according to the semi-predestinarian's way of looking at things.

Now, if the appointments of God could be thus rendered insignificant, null and void by a few measly chiggers in complete control of themselves, then why would it not make good sense for the semi-predestinarian to worship a chigger as his god? If those semi-predestinarians who are ashamed of the word "absolute--in the phrase "absolute predestination" would do this, admitting that they worship and serve the creature more than the Creator who is blessed forever, this would be fine, if they would just go on and do it and not try to bother, hinder, attack and criticize the preacher brethren who have the God-given grit, grace and gumption to preach predestination as it is.

Again, if a chigger is too unimportant for God to bother with, but enough of them could upset His appointments, then why could not other unimportant things combine to upset other appointments made by God? Job could never have said that God "performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with Him," had he been a semi-predestinarian; nor could Paul have said, "No man should be moved by these afflictions, for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto," if he were of that non-absolute predestination persuasion. The ones to whom Paul wrote knew more

than a semi-predestinarian knows, because semi-predestinarians do not know that God has appointed His children to afflictions. Would there be any end to insignificant things interrupting God's appointments, until He could not get anything done, if the critics had their way? So, the semi-predestinarian logically would have to worship only the things which he reasons are too lowly for God's consideration and predestination because in the end it would be these insignificant things which would triumph over God in the end, according to such reasoning.

Pursuing Paul's statement a bit further, would the semi-predestinarian also say that some of God's appointments are important enough that they must be kept, while other appointments of God are not? Because, if such a person exists that could tell a child of grace how to avoid an affliction to which he is appointed (I Thess. 3:3), then he could just as easily show the child of grace how to avoid the salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ to which he is also appointed (I Thess. 5:9); for, how could it be possible to thwart one of God's appointments but not another? The issue is that serious! And, make no mistake about it; we all meet people every day that avow they believe a person can die before his time if he misbehaves, and he can avoid afflictions if he will just behave right. If the market places do not abound with such folks, I have not written a word of truth.

Now, about the hornet. God controls hornets. Joshua said God controls hornets to the extend that God sent the hornet before Israel and the hornet drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before Joshua and Israel. Joshua and Israel did not do it with sword and bow; God did it with the hornets.

We sometimes hear it said that someone "stirred up a hornet's nest." This usually means that someone made

a group of folks angry, angry enough to attack and to sting. It is interesting to see who gets angry when predestination is set forth clearly by our preacher brethren, or who gets their stinger up when someone exposes the semi-predestinarian who says, "I believe in predestination, BUT I don't believe God is concerned with controlling little things like where a leaf falls, or things like chiggers, gnats, fleas and flies."

Now, if pointing out such simple things stirs up a hornet's nest, so be it, but, WHO SENDS THE HORNET? Would God send it in Joshua's day but leave it for others to send in the twentieth century? For my part I thoroughly doubt He would, as I am persuaded that the True and Living God changes not.

It is for reasons like this that I rejoice to meet with others who are of the persuasion that GOD DOETH ALL THINGS WELL!

In hope of life in Christ,
(Elder) C. C. Morris

FROM NEW MEXICO

Dear Editors of the Signs,

I am sending the money for another year of the *Signs*. I will be 80 years old the 20th of November. It is hard for me to read, I bought a magnifying glass and that helps. I look forward to the *Signs* coming each month, and I have for over 50 years. When my husband was here he read the Bible and discussed it, which I enjoyed. I have no one to converse with on the Bible now. There are no Hardshell Baptists in New Mexico. We have gone to different parts of the state after people would tell us that there were Primitive Baptists there, but they were not as we believe. I was so sorry to hear of Brother Lambert's death. We have visited with them in their home, and he has visited with us in our home.

If it be the Lord's will, I will continue

to read the *Signs of the Times*.

Mrs. James A. Bell

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left. (Isa. 30:21)

As I endeavor to write something from this text, I would pray that the Lord guide my every thought, for I often turn to the left or right and do not follow the straight and narrow path when left to myself: and invariably I go wrong and fall into many traps and errors. I would desire to pray as David, Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.

We know there are many ways to use the word 'walk', but it is my desire to apply it as 'a way of life'. The things that we think, the things we say, the things we do, and the attitude toward these, formulate our walk before men and God. It is of variable importance to each of us what our neighbors and friends think of us, and, because of our vanity, we sometimes say and do things to improve our image or esteem in the eyes of others for false reasons. When we do this, we turn out of the way and are not walking as we should before our Maker. We may deceive our fellowman, but God is never deceived, for He knows our thoughts and intents of our hearts from afar. There is not a word in our tongue that our Lord does not know before we ever speak it. This is what causes the children of the Heavenly Father to fear, and desire to walk before Him in truth and humbleness. It is only His people who desire to walk righteous in His sight, and they are the only ones who hear, "This is the way, walk ye in it." In my youth I was taught that if I would walk in the straight and narrow way I would find Jesus and walk thru those Pearly Gates with him. But I found that I could not walk in a way that I knew nothing about. I did not know Jesus,

therefore I did not know the way, nor the truth, nor the life. It may be that I do not know him now, but at times my heart rejoices in the hope that I believe he has given me. I was also taught a system of works, and I applied myself vigorously, expecting to be saved and blessed for doing these good works. Naturally my efforts were for naught, and eventually I was made to see what a great sinner I am and that all of my works of selfrighteousness is as filthy rags in His sight. Every child of grace is brought to this knowledge at some point in his life; and from that time forward he constantly begs for mercy. He is made to realize that if he is saved it is by grace thru faith; and that if he has this faith it is not of himself, but is a gift of God. Consider the two thieves who were crucified with Christ. Had either done any good thing that he could plead before God? One of them railed on Christ and said, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. But the other was made to see in that last hour that he was justly condemned, and pleaded for mercy: Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. You know the answer Christ gave. And this is the way every child of grace feels when he is made to know that he is justly condemned.

But there is a vast difference between selfrighteous works and works of faith. James tells us that faith without works is dead. The work that Abraham did in offering up his son was a work of faith. He believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. On the other hand, Saul thought he was doing great works for God as he went about persecuting the church. This was the works of the flesh and a carnal mind, but on the road to Damascus he was taught a great lesson. When that light from heaven shined round about him, he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? He had been working in the name

of One he had never known. It seems to me that is what most of the world is doing today. We should never criticize them for their belief, but have compassion. Remember who maketh us to differ. It is these same people, however, that charge that Old School or Hardshell Baptists are a 'do nothing' people; but I do not believe this for one moment. God's people will do every good work appointed unto them; For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. As surely as God hath ordained our works, we will walk in them; for His word returneth not to Him void, but it shall accomplish that which pleases Him, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto he sent it.

God's children walk by faith, not by sight. They are blessed to work, not for working; and they are blessed to hear the joyful sound, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.' And, Blessed is the people that hear the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.

There was a time when you were dead in trespasses and sin, and walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: but God, who is rich in mercy, has quickened you. You are no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. If you are in the spirit, you will walk in the spirit and not in the flesh. Paul tells us, There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. However, there is always conflict between the flesh and the Spirit; they are contrary one to the other so that you cannot do the things that you would. Therefore, as Paul admonishes us, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

What are the works of the flesh? Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, emulations,

wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and all such things. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, joy, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Brethren, let us heed Paul's admonition: If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Brethern, I ask you to accept this only as far as you find it to be in accord with the Holy Scriptures. May God bless you to hear His word, This is the way, walk ye in it.

Your prayers of faith are greatly needed and desired.

Clifford Wilbanks

EXPERIENCE

Blaire, Va.

January 17, 1981

For over twenty three years I have had a burden to record for the household of faith and for my children to know what I hope the Lord has caused my very soul to feel and experience. I was highly blessed before I was born for the Lord to predetermine that I would have parents that were of that chosen generation of Jesus Christ. O what principles of moral character, honesty and a Godly walk they did set forth for their seven children to follow. What a blessing to be raised in a home that had as our principle visitors the Lord's people. I then respected these people and admired their sincerity and love for one another but I had not the love for them that I have since I hope I have been taught the truth.

My dear wife joined Malmaison Primitive Baptist Church about two years before me and the most of those two years I was, it seemed, continually under such a strong desire to join that I would cry often when leaving the church without joining and yet could

not feel I had enough evidence that I could join without being a deceiver. After 23 years, I still have the fear that I am a mistaken person in my hope of that gift of faith and eternal life in Christ.

My first trouble religiously came as an arrow into my heart when I saw myself as comparable to my swine I was raising. I was shown I was wallowing in mud and filth and in the sight of God was no better than the swine. In trying to live better, I was shown by various experiences that I was weak, very weak, and that all of my efforts were as filthy rags in the sight of a righteous God. I knew that I was undeserving of Grace, yet I saw myself as doomed for eternal destruction unless the Lord intervened in my behalf. In the year 1957 we experienced a drought to the extend that I knew there would not be any profit from my crops, yet the very heat and cloudless skies were praising God. I was made to see His ruling supreme and divine power in every leaf and insect and in all things for all time. As I had begged of the Lord to be shown if I should join the church, He answered, I believe, with a commandment. I was resting on my sofa after the Staunton River Association in July of 1957, when the words that seemed to fill the room said "Be baptized". I had been under so much distress about the matter until I decided that I had imagined I heard those words and would just try to sleep. Suddenly the identical words came again more forcible although they were not spoken as a person would speak. It seemed it was an inward ear that heard. I believe the Lord speaks to the heart and it is always effectual. For the next two weeks, I knew that I must offer to the church on First Saturday night in August if I lived until that day. I was so impressed to do the Lord's bidding that I wanted to ask the church to accept me when the meeting started, but I refrained until the doors were opened. I felt that I would die if I did not offer for membership and yet I felt that I would

delight to do His bidding. Is not the truth and love of God a delight? Are we not extremely glad that we believe in the free grace, predestination, power, love and all of the innumerable attributes of our Heavenly Father? Puny man is as putty in His hands and He causes instant joy and obedience at His bidding. Also, we feel He causes us to be reconciled to our lot and portion in this life realizing that He alone blesses us with all spiritual and natural blessings for all of our days.

A few times I have been a passenger in an airplane and as it flew along at over six miles in height, we could see many, many miles and sights I would have never thought possible for man to behold. I was blessed with wonderful thoughts of what a tiny speck of His creation that I was beholding in comparison with the vastness of His creation. In man's exploration of space, the more he is allowed to discover, the more confused he seems to be as to God's creation. A power that could speak all of this universe into being and see the end from the beginning and yet control it all to the most minute detail could not possibly need or would have the help of sinful flesh. How pathetic and in complete darkness in the world of workers for Christ that we hear of each day. He said when upon the earth that all of the gold of Orpha and the cattle of a thousand hills were His and if He needed anything, He would not tell them. The Potter (God) has and will always have power over the clay (man).

If I have been taught the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and have received grace and favor in His sight, then all praise and glory I wish to ascribe to Him, because I know that my parents didn't teach me, or my pastor, or any other man as I could not believe as I do except I was taught from above. If the Lord's people judge me to be of the chosen few, then I would trust their judgment above all of the earth but I never expect to be without doubts and fears in this life as it

would destroy my hope.

I would encourage others to record their experiences for publication in the *Signs of the Times* as I now feel great joy and relief and don't feel I have made a mistake in expressing my heartfelt travels. At best, we only hint at the whole of God's dealing with sinners. At times, I can surely say that I love my brethren and desire your prayers continually.

An unworthy creature in hope
of eternal life,
Burnell B. Williams

EDITORIAL

Route 4, Box 21A
Winnsboro, Texas 75494
November 5, 1980

Dear Elder Poole,

During our telephone conversation you asked me to write my experience and send it to you. I attempted to write it at the request of Elder and Sister John D. Wood some twenty-two years ago, but it is just as clear in my mind today as it was then. The Lord willing, I shall attempt to write it again.

EXPERIENCE

After graduating at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, I was elected head football coach at Winnsboro High School. After serving as coach for nearly two years, I entered into the armed services and was stationed at Portland, Oregon where I met and married my wife in June 1942.

Shortly after my discharge in December 1945, we moved to San Angelo, Texas where I had been elected football line coach for the high school. My wife and I attended a church where continued pressure was put upon us to join. Several members told me it was my duty as a leader of young men to be a member of a church. They fully convinced my wife and I and we both joined in 1946. We later moved to Donna where I had been elected head coach and athletic director. After five years, I was

elected backfield coach at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. This job required my being away from my family too often so I accepted the head coaching job at Harlingen High School.

We attended church regularly during all this time enjoying and taking part in all the social activities that all these churches sponsored. Yet, I must truthfully say I never was in complete harmony with the type of preaching I heard. I attended mostly for the social life. I felt it was my duty and I wanted to see and be seen.

Around the beginning of the year 1957 something began to come over me. For the first time in my life I began to have a great desire to read the Bible. I would come home for lunch, get my Bible, and read it while eating. The preaching I was hearing now began to take on a new form; it was not in harmony with the reading from my Bible. I could see now that the God I had been worshipping was lacking in power and did not have complete control over the individual. One Sunday while we were attending church during the absence of the regular pastor, the pulpit was filled by a visiting pastor. At the end of his sermon, he began to beg the non-Christians to come forward and be saved by accepting Christ: "God wants you to, it's up to you, God can't do anything unless you are willing to let Him." This caused cold chills to run over me, and I told my wife that I just couldn't attend a church any longer where a God was worshipped who depended upon the help of man: who couldn't save man, unless man accepted Him.

My next few months were spent in going from one church to another; but none of them gave me any satisfaction. I kept searching and began to wonder if I knew myself what I was searching for. My mother wrote me and asked me to attend a Primitive Baptist Church near Donna, Texas. After a few weeks, we attended and heard Elder E. B. Ault preach; it was the sweetest preaching

that I had ever heard. He preached about an all-powerful God, One who spoke and it was done, commanded, and it stood fast. A feeling of sweetness and brotherly love seemed to flow around those present that even a stranger could comprehend.

One morning just before awakening, I dreamed of seeing myself in the midst of many thousands of sinners. We were all black; but all at once I began to shine like unto a light. I awakened at that instant, but was unable to remove the dream from my mind. During this time, every spare minute I had was taken up in reading the Bible which would continue until one or two o'clock in the morning. For the first time I could see myself as the greatest of all sinners -- all my past sins, which were many, seemed to grow bigger and bigger and I was worrying most of the day and night over them. And as each day passed, my sins seemed to be as the clouds in the sky as they become bigger and thicker. One Sunday afternoon I was sitting in our living room reading while the younger children were in the back room playing and my wife was taking a bath. I look on this now as a perfect, quiet setting for what was to take place. All at once I looked up and saw myself shining in the same way as in my dream, and at the same time all my sins began rapidly to close in on me causing me to become almost hysterical -- jumping up and running into my bedroom, I threw myself across the bed with my head in the corner. By this time my sins were crushing me, I was dying -- I couldn't even call for my wife -- one -- two -- three more breaths at the most would be my last -- Oh, what a terrible feeling to die like this -- gasping for breath, I raised up on one elbow and yelled -- "God help me -- God help me!" In an instant, the Lord entered my room, and as He entered, all my sins vanished. He not only entered the room, but He came right on down and got between my head and the floor. Brethren and Sisters, no words can

express the feeling that came over me. The presence of the Lord in my room was almost more than I could bear. My eyes followed Him as He slowly floated across the room. I don't know what He looked like but my eyes followed Him. I felt Him with all my heart and soul. I just lay there on my bed and wept aloud trembling from head to foot. My wife came into the room shortly afterwards and found me weeping like a child. She came over and put her arm around me--I couldn't understand why, after finding me in my condition, it didn't excite her. She asked me in a few minutes what had happened. I told her, God had saved my life. She said that she had also felt the presence of something in the room. She left the room, and as I was ready to get up a Voice spoke to me with great power and authority and said, *you will join the church.* I jumped at the sound of His voice and answered aloud, "I will, I will!" There was no doubt in my mind the church being the Primitive Baptist Church. I was afraid to go to bed that night not knowing what to expect. The next day it was like walking on air, my every thought was on the Lord, in my conversation with other people, my thoughts were always on Him; oh, how close He seemed to be to me. While walking from the High School to the gym, I looked up at the clouds and saw something in them I had never seen before; a bird flew over and as I watched it, I thought God knows even the flight of that bird before the bird does. The trees took on a different aspect. I saw God in all these things; these things I had seen many times before now took on a different glow.

My prayers seemed to flow directly to Him. I wanted to praise Him to everyone I saw, but felt they couldn't understand. This feeling gradually went away and before another week was over, I seemed to have lost everything -- my prayer's didn't seem to get any farther than my lips and sometimes I would give up in shame and dismay. The more I tried to

keep from sinning, the more I would sin. I began to worry about joining the church, I felt too unworthy to offer myself to such a sweet people as the Primitive Baptists yet the Lord had spoken that I would join. I prayed that God would tell me when. Several meetings passed, when on the second Sunday in May, 1957, Sister Ault requested that we sing the first three verses of "Children of the Heavenly King." After singing three verses, I started to close my book, while for some reason the congregation continued to sing; during the next verse, that same strong force with all authority spoke once more. I could hardly get to Elder Ault fast enough, but at the same time possessed a feeling of unworthiness. I was taken into the church and baptized that afternoon.

A short time later, my next experience came. Another Sunday afternoon as I was reading, I looked up to see my future pathway of life open up to me and a great pain come over me. The way that the Lord had shown me was more than I felt I could bear. The pathway was full of ups and downs, and the burden that He placed upon my shoulders was more than I felt I could undertake. For a second my thoughts were: Lord, is it too late to turn back and live the life I once lived and walk according to the course of this world fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind? But, oh, how I begged His forgiveness and if this was the way He had chosen for me, it was the way I wanted to go. My prayer was that whatever that pathway might be -- God only give me the courage, strength, and guidance to enable me to walk through it. This burden was very disturbing to me. About a month after this took place, I attended a three day meeting at Cana Church near Winnsboro, Texas. Elder and Sister Wood were there. After lunch on Friday, most everyone had gone back into the church and started singing. I was talking to some one and as he left, I looked over and saw Sister Wood

coming over to me. She said, "Tell me about your experience." I wondered how she knew. I had not told anyone. As I began to relate my experience, I left off about the heavy burden that I felt and she said, "You have not told me everything" This was more than I could stand as I broke down crying. I wondered if Christ had been talking to her.

This burden was revealed when the church asked for my ordination to the ministry. I said over and over I will not go through with it. We left for a visit with my parents a week before the date set by the church. I left with full intentions of not going back. Oh, how I begged God to give me a sign if this was according to His will. My soul was heavy laden and laboring under this burden. Three days before my ordination, the sweetest most wonderful, complete calmness came over me that I have ever felt in my life. A feeling of being completely submissive prevailed over me. I trust this was God's answer to my prayers.

The burden of going before God's people has never completely left me. The dear people I'm attempting to serve show such love and respect towards me. At time I wonder, am I a deceiver to these wonderful people? Yet I feel, that I can truthfully say with Ruth, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people," and above all, I want, "thy God, my God."

I was given a wonderful vision one night that occupied my mind much of the time for a long while, and still enters my mind quite often. I saw myself riding in a passenger train which had three coaches and a small coal burning engine pulling it. The three coaches had only a few scattered people in each. I was riding in the last coach sitting on the rear seat next to a window. We were moving along and came to a long steep hill that went straight up. As we started

up the hill I was sure the train would tumble over backward and we would all be destroyed. As we reached the halfway point the little engine gathered renewed power and on up we went. I couldn't understand how this could happen. As we were going on we came to a wide body of water. The track ran on across the water on an ill constructed platform with no railings on the sides. When I saw how uneven the tracks were, I felt for sure the train would fall into the water and we would all be drowned. The little train wobbled on across in spite of my inability to understand how. I looked out of the window once more and saw where the track made a 90 degree turn which I felt would be impossible to make. When the little engine made the turn, I saw a form sitting at the controls and a voice came to me saying, no wonder, Jesus Christ is at the controls! "For in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Isaiah 26:4.

The wonderful feeling of love and compassion that I felt in my heart for all the wonderful people with whom I met while on our trip last July to North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland as well as Alabama and Mississippi, gives me some hope that I have passed from death unto life because I love the brethren. The same holds true with all of God's people in all places where I have had the sweet privilege to be in their midst. I often think of the Lord's great salvation, and ask myself, "Is it possible that our Blessed Redeemer has condescended so low in His amazing love and pity to save me?"

Yes, my dear friends, it is a fact that our God did embrace a people in the everlasting covenant that He made with His Son and Holy Spirit before the foundation of the world; and His truth says, "It was ordered in all things and sure." This God is the same now as He was then or else He has changed. But He says, "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." (Mal. 3:6) He in the most

remote depths of eternity made this covenant of peace and the beauty of it is that He changes not. What sweetness there is in His word when He says, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isa. 46:9, 10) I trust to be thankful that I believe in a God who embraces His people in this covenant that is ordered in all things and sure.

How satisfying it should be to all of us to know that this great God is at the helm of the entire universe, working all things after the counsel of His own will, and who says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." (Jer. 31:3) How comforting when He says, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (Cor. 12:9) His people are kept as the apple of His eye, and the death of His saints is precious in His sight.

A sinner in hope of mercy,
(Elder) Joe L. Hamrick

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NOTICE

We hope, the Lord willing, to soon reprint in the pages of the *Signs of the Times* the small book entitled "The Early Religious Life of Elder David Bartley".

This book is very rare now and we feel the Lord's people will find this opportunity to read it very beneficial. Elder Bartley wrote for the *Signs* many years and is remembered chiefly for his book, "The Priesthood of the Son of God."

Editors

STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

The one hundred fortieth session of the Staunton River Association will convene with the Church at Canaan on July 10, 11, 12th, which is the second weekend.

The church is located in Pittsylvania County, west of Danville, Virginia, on State Road 844. From Danville follow Highway 41 about 12 miles and turn left at Frances Store. The church is located about 3 miles on the right from this store. Watch for signs to direct you from Highway 41.

Burnell B. Williams
Association Clerk

CHANGE OF MEETING

The Lebanon Primitive Baptist Church of Bracey, Virginia will change their hours of service on the 2nd Sunday of each month to 2:30 P.M. We cordially invite our brethren and friends to meet with us.

Thomas S. Martin
Clerk

JEHOVAH-JIREH

(The Lord Will Provide)

Recently the *Signs of the Times* received twenty-five thousand (\$25,000.00) dollars from settlement of Elder Durwood Bradley's estate. In addition, we also received a check from Mrs. Durwood Bradley, Elder Bradley's widow, in the amount of \$1,000.00. We trust we are all humbly thankful to God for this timely provision.

Elder Bradley, of Lubbock, Texas, was a faithful minister of our order and a long time supporter of the *Signs*. Through the kindness and consideration of his wife we were able to receive his gift much earlier than we had expected, and we might add, at a time of need.

By investing the whole sum in an interest bearing certificate we will now receive enough additional revenue to greatly relieve our monthly expenses.

Truly, the Lord does provide.

Editors

FROM LOUISIANA

Ruston, Louisiana

Dear Friends:

Please renew my subscription for the *Signs of the Times* for another year. I have grown up with it and am now a senior adult, myself, but I love the articles in the *Signs* and the people who write them - also the ones who read them.

Please use the extra money to help send it to some who cannot now afford to pay for it.

With best wishes to you all and love in Christ Jesus.

Mrs. Ruth T. Smith

FROM ALABAMA

Carbon Hill, Alabama

Dear Editors,

We have just received our December *Signs of the Times* and due to illness, we have not been able to keep up with our subscription to both our dear papers, the *Signs* and the "Old Faith Contender". Due to old age and illness we have let this slip by, for which we are so sorry and hope you can pardon us. We love God's precious words and we know they are His words, and since we can't attend church any more, we look forward to our precious papers each month. Please keep our *Signs of the Times* coming to us. We pray for all you Editors, for the precious Lord to spare you and give you health to press on in

these perilous times in which we are living.

We do miss the great privilege of meeting with God's people as we were so blessed to do until the last three years. My health failed so quickly after breaking my hip; then my dear husband, in trying to take care of me and do all the work he could, his health has failed him. His age is now 85 years, but the dear Lord has blessed us so much I do not want to complain. We try to thank Him each day and night and every hour of the day. We live by reading His wonderful word, and enjoying His many blessings.

I wish I could write good sweet articles like so many we read, but it seems I can not find the right words to express my feelings.

We hope Brother Griffin's health is better now. We miss his wonderful articles when they are not in the paper, along with several others. Some of our dear ones have passed on from us.

I hope this has been written in love and thankfulness for all you dear editors. May you be given health to continue, the Lord willing.

We hope in Precious Hope,
Lillian and James C. Scott

FROM OHIO

Franklin, Ohio

Dear Editors of the *Signs of the Times*,

I look forward to each issue of the *Signs* and hardly put it down until I have read it through. I especially love the "Voices of the Past, He being dead yet speaketh". I never tire of reading my old copies of the *Signs*, dated back to 1900. In one of my Mom's copies, dated May 15, 1911, she had a piece marked, I assume a favorite of hers, and I've read and re-read it. It was written by Frank McGlade, of Hebron, Ohio, on Mark 5:19, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee". This has been much

comfort to me.

I'm sorry I am late with my subscription.

With love to all the precious household of faith, I remain, unworthily,

Yours in hope,
Mrs. James W. (Edith) Johnson

FROM TEXAS

Grand Prairie, Texas

Dear Elder Williams,

Please extend my subscription for another year. Enclosed please find a check to cover this.

Next to the Bible, we couldn't do without it. My wife and I identified ourselves with the Old School Baptists about 10 years ago, coming from the Missionary people.

God has been good to me and my family. We are poor in this world's goods, for which I am thankful, but if not deceived, we are rich, counting what the good Lord has entrusted in our care. My health is not good, yet I am happy with the path the Lord has marked out for me. Whatever befalls us, we are happy, because we feel we are not alone. We pray God's blessings are yours at His good pleasure. Pray for us when you approach the Throne of Grace.

In Hope,
Paul Russell

FROM TENNESSEE

Lenoir City, Tenn.

Dear Editors,

I have received the February issue of the *Signs of the Times*. I see it is time for me to renew my subscription. You will find money enclosed to cover two more years.

I enjoy reading every issue and hope I am thankful to God for each of you.

Yours truly,
J. Henry Chamberlain

THE ARTICLES OF FAITH AS THEY
ARE IN THE
PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION

"We believe there is but one true and living God, and that in the Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Word, or Son, and Holy Ghost, and these are One in essence, power, and glory."

"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made". John 1:3. And in the 14th verse, "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: "Colossians 2:9, 10.

Christ took on Himself a body of flesh like that of ours with sin excepted. Christ did not receive the Spirit by measure, "all of the fulness of the Godhead".

I want to give a few thoughts about the second Article of Faith; that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written word of God, and the only complete and unerring rule of faith and practice. I will only give my views on the first two Articles, for there are eleven Articles, and as far as I know I am agreed with all them, but it would take up too much space to comment on all of them.

No Church has any right to adopt rules that are unscriptural. Neither does an Association have the right to adopt rules that are unscriptural. Any rule that would serve as a bar against a person who has repented with a godly repentance in having fellowship with the Church is unscriptural. Any rule in turning one out of fellowship without a scriptural cause is a great offense to one of the little ones. Most of the time that one is turned out without a just cause, it is by a head rule of someone trying to get revenge, and the rule is not even on the

Church book, but in the head of someone that is being exercised without love.

This is all about the Articles of Faith at this time.

I have been reading the *Signs* today. I received much strength from Elder Griffin's article. I also enjoyed Elder Poole's article on the "Valley of Dry Bones". I believe that the Editors and other writers are gifted more than ever, and as long as they continue to do so, I will want the *Signs* to continue to come to my box as long as I can read. The *Signs* is the best way that I know how to communicate. May God keep us in peace is my prayer.

(Elder) J. R. Hollandsworth

Rutledge, Alabama

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed is \$9.00 for two years subscription to the *Signs of the Times*.

I sure do enjoy reading the *Signs* very much and I believe the Old Baptist doctrine.

A Brother in Hope,
Homer Killough

OBITUARIES

ROSA HUMPHREY

It pleased our heavenly Father to remove from our midst, Sister Rosa Humphrey, Sept. 21, 1980. She was in her early eighties. She was the widow of the late Bro. George Humphrey, who died Jan. 1956. She is survived by six children, three sons, three daughters, and one sister.

She united with Cypress Creek church Feb. 29, 1980 and was baptized by Elders Harmon Brown and D. B. Stokes. She was with us just a short time, but she will be missed. Her appearance always was one of humbleness and meekness. She was afflicted for many years, but was blessed with faith and patience to run the course set before her. We trust she's asleep now, awaiting the Morn of the Resurrection when

our Saviour comes to gather His jewels home.

Her funeral was preached at graveside by Elder Harmon Brown, her pastor, and Mr. C. A. Huneycutt, Jr.

Done by order of November conference that three copies be made; one for the church records, one for the family and one sent to *Signs of the Times* for publication.

Velma Horne, Clerk
Elder Harmon Brown, Moderator

OMAR POPE DARROW

Sister Omar Pope Darrow was born the daughter of Bro. James Forsythe and wife, Elizabeth.

On July 24, 1924 she was received into the fellowship of Durham Primitive Baptist Church and was baptized on Friday night, August 1, 1924 by Elder C. B. Hall. She loved the doctrine of salvation by grace and loved to visit among the Old Baptist churches far and near. She was blessed to go among them even in old age and enjoyed entertaining them in her home. It was a source of great pleasure to her that two of her sisters, Zone Forsythe Page and Vera Forsythe Faucette were also members of the Durham Church and they enjoyed a kinship that was deeper than natural ties.

She was married to Robert Pope who preceeded her in death. She was the mother of the following children: Margaret Pope DeMasi, Nannie Pope Bass, Robert H. Pope, Jr., Arthur Benton Pope, Rachel Pope Maillet, and John T. Pope.

She received her education in Durham and for a number of years served in the Library at Oak Grove School in Durham County.

Sister Omar passed from this life on April 20, 1976. Her funeral was conducted by Elder D. V. Spangler and her body was laid to rest to await the Resurrection and the complete fulfillment of her Hope.

Submitted in love and respect,
Catherine M. Humbarger

GUY EZRA CONNER

Guy Ezra Conner was born to George Ben and Ellen Conner on Feb. 8, 1889, and passed away September 14, 1980. He was married to Nellie Francis Poff in 1910. To this union

seven children were born. Only three survive; Dessie Conner, Alvin Conner, and Aldine Nichols.

Brother Conner united with Salem Primitive Baptist Church in the year of 1925. He was a faithful member until death. He was ordained Deacon on August 13, 1932, and was chosen Clerk in 1957.

Brother Conner was married to Sister Ora Nichols on September 15, 1961. Sister Ora was a good help mate. She waited on him with patience. He often expressed how thankful he was to have someone to wait on him.

After Brother Conner was old he never tried to run the church. Anything the church did was alright with him. If they needed financial support he was willing to help. He was not like some I have seen. He never complained about the things of the church nor his wife. He was thankful for everything.

When he was in his right mind he was praising the Lord. He loved to sing songs of Zion and to hear preaching. That was his joy.

We at Salem Church will miss Brother Guy. He was good to me, and we believe he is at rest. The Lord knows best.

His funeral was preached at Salem Church on September 16, 1980, by Elder Roy Agee, Elder Lane Carter, Elder Hale Terry. His body was laid to rest by his first wife in Salem Cemetery.

Written by Elder Roy Agee

BROTHER PERCY J. LAWRENCE

In memory of Percy J. Lawrence, who was born in Floyd County, Virginia, March 4, 1893, and passed from this life October 25, 1980, making his stay here 87 years, 6 months and 21 days. He was married to Locie West on December 24, 1919.

Brother and Sister Lawrence united with Salem Primitive Baptist Church on October 16, 1960. They were baptized by Elder B. Odel Thompson.

The Lord blessed Brother Lawrence to live a quite, honest, and peaceful life. He had many friends. He was a good neighbor and he never got too busy to help others.

He was one who never had much to say, but when he spoke it made you stop and think.

He manifested a love for the Lord's people

and was a good judge of the truth, and a firm believer in salvation by the grace of God.

Brother Lawrence was interested in the welfare of the church and was always ready to lend a helping hand and willing to go along with the church in anything they felt was right.

Brother and Sister Lawrence had loved these people for many years, but were not blessed to unite with them until their last days, and when they came there was no questions to be asked.

We loved Brother Lawrence, we hope, for Christ's sake. We miss him in many ways as a neighbor and as a brother in the church. Our heart goes out to Sister Lawrence.

His funeral was conducted by Elder Roy Agee and Elder Lane Carter at Salem Church. His body was laid to rest in Restvale Cemetery.

Written by
Elder Roy Agee

SISTER MAGGIE LEE HAYES

After many months of intense sufferings caused by advancing old age, the death angel visited the home of our sister and called her out of this world to a far better rest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sister Hayes was born May 14, 1892, the daughter of the late Elder and Sister C. H. Davis. She was the last member of her generation left. She was married to our good Baptist friend, and we believe by the evidence left by him, our brother in the Lord Jesus Christ, Mr. W. B. Hayes, on July 26, 1912. Mr. Hayes died a few years ago. To this union three children were born, to wit, Charles, William, and Ruth. William was killed several years ago in an automobile accident. Charles is a member of Poplar Springs Church near the hometown of Vernon. Ruth, the daughter, is in the old home, and is a believer in the doctrine of God our Saviour. There are four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Sister Hayes was a member of Poplar Springs Church here in the Buttahatchie Association, having been baptized by the late Elder E. Z. McCool. She was well posted in the history and the doctrine of the Primitive Baptists. Her grandfather, Elder L. M. Wimberly, and Elder C. H. Davis, were well known Primitive Baptist ministers. She

was a keen listener and it was seldom that an elder ever got by with introducing any new departure in doctrine or practice.

She traveled tens of thousands of miles seeking items of church history, and she was able to get information about religious subjects from many places in the world. The history of the Welsh Tract Church was the object of much world research on her part. She would not want me to eulogize her, but just to say to her kindred in the Lord that she was tired and desired to go home. As one closely associated with her and her family, I am free to say that a humble saint has left us, and my testimony of her is that she knew in Whom she had believed and that He was able to keep that which she had committed unto Him until the final and second coming of the Lord.

Funeral services were conducted in Sullivan's Funeral Home in Vernon, Alabama, where she had lived the most of her life. Elder W. D. Griffin spoke in prayer, and her Pastor, Elder H. C. Moon, preached a sermon according to the doctrine of God our Saviour.

(Elder) W. D. Griffin

SISTER LUDDIE HARBOUR

We the Church at Rosemary bow in humble submission to the will of our Heavenly Father in taking from us our Sister Harbour.

Sister Harbour was born February 28, 1891, and departed this life October 10, 1980. She was married to Brother E. D. Harbour on January 14, 1922. Brother Harbour departed this life December 5, 1970.

Brother and Sister Harbour joined the Rosemary Primitive Baptist Church in September 1962. They were true and faithful members.

Sister Harbour left to mourn one son, Clarence Harbour, and one daughter, Mrs. Marie Page, and four grandchildren.

Her funeral was conducted by Mr. Emmitt Thompson, and she was laid to rest in Cedarwood Cemetery. We feel that our loss is her gain.

Done by order of conference in session at Rosemary, Saturday before the first Sunday in December, 1980.

Elder Randall Saunders, Moderator
Eula Johnson, Church Clerk

Signs of the Times

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 7/81
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

EXPERIENCE

After reading Elder Hollandsworth's experience and his plea to hear what the Lord has done for others, I had a great desire that I might write just a little of how the Lord has brought me along.

Before I was a member of the Salem Baptist Church I took my five little girls and went most every Sunday to a church or a Sunday School. We attended the Brethren, Methodist, Holiness and the Primitive Baptist. My husband would not go with us and this seemed to bother me very much. One morning when I pressed him to come with us, he became angry with me and told me to leave him alone. I went on to church that morning with a heavy heart and the feeling that I was leaving something behind. My heart cried out, "Oh, Lord, does he even believe there is a God?"

Shortly after that, we were sitting at our breakfast table talking and he began to tell me how he had gone out to the barn and got down on his knees and begged God to spare his little sister's life when they thought she was about to die. There was my answer. Thank you, Lord! He does believe there is a God.

During my travel from place to place I promised myself two things. I was not going to join the church until my children were all grown for then I could take them to movies and wherever they wanted to go. Also, I was disgusted with the Primitive Baptist and I was going to quit going there.

Well time rolled on and I was 34 years old, my baby girl was 4. I became very

sick naturally and spiritually. It was then that a great desire came within that I might go to Salem Church just a few yards down the road. I began to beg God to give me strength to get to church on their next meeting day. It seemed at that time that someone walked with me every step that I took. He, my Savior, was all that I had, for it seemed that I didn't have a friend in the whole wide world. I was so sick physically that I couldn't even do my housework. My little four year old stood by my bed and begged for me to get up for a little while. She seemed so worried about her Mother that I begged God to let me live to see her grown.

While reading to her one day lying on my bed, the doctor whom I had been seeing appeared to me as a little miniature man and smiled sweetly. I pondered over this but it left my mind shortly. Soon I became worse and went back to this doctor and there he appeared to me in the same manner I had seen him on my bed. Through God, this doctor was able to help me. God is our earthly and heavenly physician.

Spiritually, I was even sicker. I searched the scriptures for comfort and only found condemnation. If He sent me to hell, I knew He was a righteous God. However, when meeting day came, He blessed me to walk to church and I could not leave without asking for a home. I was baptized the second Sunday in September 1965.

That morning as I set about to get ready for my baptism, a terrible storm arose within my heart and soul. I just could not go! I would tell my husband to go and tell them that I could not be baptized. There just wasn't enough time for me to get ready for I felt so bad. The storm was raging so that I began to pray, "Lord, please help this poor sinner." I believe that I can witness with Jesus' disciples when they cried, "Lord save us or we perish." At that moment my soul became calm and a blessed peace came over me that surpasses all

understanding. Yes, even the winds and the seas obey Him!

I began to get ready for my baptism and everything was peaceful and calm. My husband and children were ready and waiting for me when I came out from dressing. This too was a blessing for me as I didn't know if my husband would go to my baptizing as he had never attended church with me but a very few times over the years.

As I came from the water, I was given a joy that filled my soul. That joy and peace is what I'm looking forward to knowing one day, if I should be one of his. Never again to know heartaches and afflictions, but to know Him as He is be like Him and be satisfied forevermore.

Sometime later, the thought came to me, "Now, what are you going to do about taking your children to the movies?" I began to ponder over this deeply and could never remember hearing the Baptist speak against the movies. Then I asked God to help me to do the right thing in His sight.

One day as I sat in church listening to my dear pastor, Elder Roy Agee, he began to talk about the movies. Suddenly, he said, "I do not know why I'm on this subject. I'm not telling you not to go to the movies but I am saying that I cannot go." Of course, I knew why he was on the subject and thanked my Lord for helping me though I never mentioned this to Brother Roy or any of the other brethren.

Later, the children asked to go to a movie, so I thought that I could go and take them. We began to look for what was showing at the different places and there it was, "The Ten Commandments." If I was going, I would choose something good. Well my brethren and friends, as I sat there in the movie, it came to the part where Moses came down from the Mount with the tablet of the ten commandments and he found Aaron and his people worshipping the golden calf. There, I

was made to look around over the audience and what did I see?? The people were the same as the people in the picture worshipping the golden calf and the picture itself was the golden calf. Oh, my dear brethern, I was in that mess.

I became very sick, such a headache I'll never forget. I thought that I would surely die before I ever reached my home but once more, the Lord spared me. When I drove our car into the driveway safe and sound, I thanked God and told my children that I could not go again but if they desired to go, I would not stand in their way for I trusted the same God to guide and direct their footsteps too as He had also recently wrought a most unbelievable change in my husband. He was attending church every weekend with us and was truly enjoying every minute of it. I had so much to be thankful for.

Speaking of being thankful, I would like to tell you of a most thankful day of my life. It was a beautiful Thanksgiving day almost ten years ago. Mother earth was covered with a blanket of snow and there was the stillness that seem to say, "See the beautiful work of God."

I arose early that morning to get our turkey ready for the oven. We had all our children home from school for the holiday and as I placed the turkey in the oven I thought of my mother, as she loved turkey so good. I then had a desire to call and invite both sets of parents, my husband's and mine, to come and have Thanksgiving lunch with us. They both accepted.

When the lunch was ready and everyone began to gather around the table, I believe I was given a truly thankful heart. Those parents all looked so sweet and lovely that my heart filled with love and my eyes with tears. I turned and busied myself with something at the sink so no one could see me. After getting in control of myself, I told the children that they should be thankful for that day for not many children had that many

grandparents. In saying this, I did not know that both sets of parents were soon to be broken. My mother passed away with a brain hemorrhage on December 12, 1971 and my father-in-law in the following August through an accident in front of our house. To me that Thanksgiving was a wonderful day of my life to be always remembered. The Lord gave me that day to prepare a Thanksgiving lunch for my loved ones and He gave me the thankful heart at the right moment to realize how gracious He had been to us all.

He had also given me a dream before my mother died in which I believed someone of my family was going to be called away. Later another dream that two more would soon go. That was my father-in-law and then my brother on December 18, 1972. On Friday before my father-in-law's death on Monday, I was given these words very forcefully several times that day, "If God be for you, who can be against you." Brethern and friends, those words were very special to me the following months and still are wonderful in my heart for He truly showed me and my husband the working of His almighty hand. He has power over all things. Not even the sparrow can fall without His knowing. Our earthly and spiritually blessings are all of Him.

Yes, Brother Hollandsworth, I too wonder sometimes why I am thus. Sometimes I feel so far away from God and my brethern and wonder if I have a part in the matter at all. Then sometimes that love is present and all is well. I feel assured at those times that my Jesus reigns in heaven and in earth.

In Bonds of Love,
Mary C. Poff

Dear Brother in Christ Jesus, as we hope,

I see my time is out for the *Signs*. I don't want to miss a single copy. I so much enjoy its contents.

I've taken it now for many years and it

has brought much joy to my heart. I love to hear and read the truth.

I hear so much false talked and preached on the radio. It is sickening. The Bible says the truth will make us free. Nothing but truth is going to stand when the end of times comes.

Sometimes we are hated for the truth, but it only brightens my little hope.

Dear Brother, when you are blessed to pray, please remember this poor old sinner, I hope saved by God's grace if saved at all.

Mrs. Lillian Faulkner

P. S. Use the balance of check as you see fit.

COPIED FROM AN OLD SIGNS

Brother William K. Roberson, Pastor of the Church at Welch Tract, Delaware County, writes as follows:

"Let it for the present, suffice to say, there is nothing very special among us—we are favored with peace and harmony among ourselves. The Preachers of Philadelphia seem to pity us here in Delaware, and are going to send some Missionaries to convert us, etc. I think they will have a hard task to perform, at least with some of us, while we have our Bibles in our hands, and the light of the Holy Spirit to direct us. We believe that regeneration is effected, not by human might or power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord".

Yours, In Gospel Bonds
William K. Roberson

January 13, 1835

EXPERIENCE

In this writing may my hand be guided by God and the only praise be unto His Holy Name, since I believe I've been taught of my weakness, and where my strength comes from.

Calvin and I were married in 1934,

after knowing each other six months. My age was 16 and he was 23. We first had a son, and then a daughter sixteen months later.

Times were hard and there was little money to live on. We had to do without many things we felt we needed. Calvin and he loved the taste of whiskey and was seldom home. When I ever left the house it was to the doctor or dentist. I tried to make myself satisfied, for there was lots of work with two small children.

After our third child was born (our second son), in 1940, all seemed to worsen. Calvin was seldom home day or night, including week-ends. My age was 23 when this child was born. It was a lonely time for me and I felt unloved.

I began to lose weight and didn't have any appetite. I had fainting spells, even in the doctor's office. The doctor said my blood was poisoned from a tonsil infection, and an operation had to be done. I was sent to the hospital to be built up for it.

Some time during the operation the word "Alpha" came to me, leaving me in what seemed a grasping for yet another word. It seemed to be taking all my strength, when the word "Omega" came up before me. The doctor said he felt he was losing me. My sister-in-law was with me during the operation and said she thought I had bled to death, but it was not God's time.

For a while all seemed to go better. Then trouble was back again and it seemed worse than before. Bitterness became a regular companion. I started to feel myself to be too good for so many problems. I tried to reason them out feeling if we both tried we could work out the problems. We kept making the same mistakes over again, with more added. One night I went to bed in a room to myself feeling so down, and felt all had been done on my part and we couldn't get along. I was awakened out of sleep with a feeling of a moving force by my bed. It seemed to come closer. I didn't

understand the noise of a groaning sound, but was in great fear. Thoughts raced through my mind. How dare I feel that I was good. Then I saw myself as I really was for the first time. I didn't see any good at all. The fight seemed to go out from me.

Then it seemed as a finger touched me in my chest. It seemed to make me feel there was going to be some peace, patience, and understanding. I felt different, somehow.

Somehow I wanted to tell Calvin of this in the morning, and I tried, but he turned away saying he didn't want to hear it. This seemed to stay with me, and although I couldn't talk of it, it seemed to cause me to feel more reconciled, at least most of the time.

Ten years after the birth of our third child, a daughter was born in 1950. The doctor said it had to be a miracle that we both made it. She was born premature and had to have constant and special care. Calvin tried to help more since the doctor told him my health was so poor, and with three in school there was a lot of work.

One night after going to bed alone it seemed my hand was picked up off the bed and held. A comfort came over me and I didn't have any fears. I just felt amazement for this seemed so natural. I asked the words, "Why are you holding my hand?" The felt hand was drawn very slowly in a gentle way, down to my finger tips. I wanted so much to talk with my husband, but didn't want the same answer or misunderstanding again, so I kept this to myself and it wasn't so hard to do as I had thought it would be.

One Sunday night around ten o'clock, I had settled the baby in for a few hours, and thinking Calvin to be asleep, I tried to get to sleep, too, but seemed to feel more awake than usual. I heard my name called and the sound seemed to fill the house. Without thought, I answered with the word, "What?" I got out of bed to turn the silent switch on by the door in

the next room, to see if the baby was alright. She was asleep and so peacefully, too.

I believe a prayer of thanks went out. I crept back in bed thinking my husband must be sound asleep. I was trembling and in fear again, hearing a voice. Was I losing my mind? Fear grew worse daily. I believe I asked for a sign. By Thursday night when Calvin came home he looked straight at me and said, "Sunday night you were called and you answered". The tears flowed with relief.

Thinking now was the time we could talk, but he only said, "We won't talk about it again, and don't tell anyone else, because they won't believe it."

About this time a change began to take place. For one thing, Calvin was considering me more than before. People seemed to notice and comment. He started looking up a few people among the Old Baptist. This surprised me to learn of his visits, but he didn't include me in his plans.

I can't remember how long it was before he started dressing and leaving the house on Sundays, and didn't return for the noon meal. He received a few tongue lashes from me for not being at home for the noon meal. I didn't feel ashamed of myself at the time. I felt this to be my right. He would look hurt, and after much pressure from me he admitted he had gone to meeting at the Old Baptist Meeting House. I told him I would like to go with him, and for him to let me know when he was going. He said he didn't intend to go when he left the house; that he intended on going elsewhere, but he felt drawn to go to meeting, so he didn't tell me. There was little understanding on my part.

One Sunday he came home and found me in an unusual state. It seemed like a great weight was bearing down on me, and I remember trying to push this weight away with my hands. It seemed it would come down and crush me. I couldn't touch a thing with lifted hands.

It came to my mind of an Aunt of

Calvin's on their way to Norfolk, Virginia where they lived. It seemed they were in some trouble. Her husband and she had been up to Salisbury for a funeral of her sister. Both of the sisters were members of the Salisbury Old School Baptist Church, as was Calvin's father, Mr. Holloway. Mr. Holloway had been dead several years before this time.

When Calvin walked in the house the weight lifted away, but he looked at me and said, "I hope you don't have to go through what you have just been through". I told him as much as I could of what I had felt.

That night the Uncle called and said they had an accident on the way home and thought of us first, but we were too far away to be of any help to them. The accident wasn't too serious, but it shook them up and gave them a few cuts and bruises.

This experience, I believe, was given me to show me there is nothing I can do to prevent or change anything from taking place, great or small. Most of my time had been spent in trying to change our lives for the better, not knowing where the help would come from.

In the year of 1958 Calvin and I began going to meeting together. We hadn't gone together much before this. At times one of the other of the children would go with us, but most of the time the youngest daughter, June, born in 1950, would go.

Some nights Calvin was unable to rest and would get out of bed and walk the floor and try to read the Bible, saying he just couldn't sleep. One of those nights I also went downstairs to see if he could, or wanted to talk, because I felt he needed his rest and that if he could talk about it he might be able to go back to bed and sleep. He was always very quiet at these times so as not to disturb the rest of the family. I found him searching for the hymn with the words, "Fear not trembling one, it is I". He told me these words came to him and he felt he was

being lifted, and turned over in bed.

We looked the hymn up, and it was Number 607 in the Lester, Durand Book:

"When the storm in its fury on Galilee fell,
And lifted its waters on high,
And the faithless disciples were bound in the spell,
Jesus whispered, 'Fear not it is I'."

We talked awhile about our still being together; feeling only the Lord could have kept us together and brought us this way.

Soon afterwards there was to be a Baptism at Schumaker Pond here in Salisbury. Elder Spangler was in town at this time and he and Calvin talked. They had had several good visits before. Calvin told him he was afraid the people wouldn't take him in the church as he felt himself to be full of sin and not worthy. But Elder Spangler told him, "They will receive you, Calvin".

We went on to the baptism where three others were to be baptized. (I believe it to have been a Sister Lank, for Forest Grove, and Brothers Frank Holland and Albert Fooks for membership at Snow Hill.) Calvin was received at the water and baptized that day.

He was happy in the church but at times shed tears for the fellowship he had missed with his father E. Calvin Holloway, while he was living. He said, "If I had only had one hour with my father, to fellowship what he had in the Church".

However, he seemed to become reconciled to this, along with his own approaching death. Although he didn't appear sick, he kept telling me what he wanted me to do when this took place. I didn't want to take this seriously.

One morning I told him of a dream I had during the night. I dreamed about numbers large and curved in shape, and of gold color. They were all so perfect in size, and all the same except the last number. It seemed to be the same size but it was not bright and not clear. The first three were 195, and it seemed the last was a 9. A short time afterwards Calvin died on Saturday the 10th of January, 1959.

Calvin was only in church a short time before his death, but I had yet to see a greater love that he seemed to feel for his brethren. He seemed to feel his time was short and he tried to tell me so many times. He also told me of things he had experienced, and had kept to himself. One night we talked most of the night. Out of all this we were made to love each other in a way we never felt before. It was a far greater love that united us than when we stood years before to take our wedding vows. I feel to say that He knew us when we knew Him not.

After Calvin's death my place of comfort seemed to be in going to the meetings.

One night there seemed to be a moving force by my bed. Not thinking of even the child in the next room, I lifted my arms to be drawn in. A voice spoke these words, "I'm gone now." It was all over. Somehow I felt death must be like that, and that all was well with Calvin. It was a comfort for I was in need to be comforted.

I went before the church on June 7, 1959, was received, and baptized the same day.

My youngest Son, Paul, took me to meeting that day. I promised him to come away right after meeting. He had made other plans, and this was his graduation time from high school. While the Hymn was being sung, "When I can read my title clear", I felt myself being drawn to the front of the meeting house. It seemed a great trembling took place with me. I later thought of the promise I had made to my son. Usually I tried not to make promises, feeling not to be sure I could keep them.

My oldest son, Ronnie, came to drive me over to be baptized and all the children were there to see it except June, the youngest. She didn't want to go, so I didn't force her, feeling she was still missing her Father and that she might associate baptism with death.

One day she said to me, "Dad is better off than we are. He won't have to get old

and sick. And he didn't just leave us; he was taken away." I felt the Lord gave her this comfort as she loved her Father better than she loved anyone else.

Several times the thought came to me to be thankful that Calvin had been given to go home to his friends in the church and be counted with them before his death. I feel to say it couldn't have been other than it was, since all our ways are known by Him. If we are His, He knew us first before we knew Him.

After eight years I married again. Russell is a fine man and he is very good to me. We have been married thirteen years. I believe we are thankful for each other, but most of all for goodness bestowed upon us. Russell united with the church in 1975.

At times I feel to be nothing at all, but since I feel to know His grace is free, and He knows my frame, may I always be given to say that His grace is sufficient.

Unworthy of myself,
A little Sister,
Pauline Jennings

Frisco City, Alabama

To Signs of the Times, Inc.

Please renew my subscription for two more years. It expired 11/80. I am sending a check for \$12.00. Use the balance as you see fit.

I am sending the experiences of my Mother, Emma Shumock, and also her brother, Elder T. T. McQueen. You may print these in your paper if you want to.

Mother meant so much to me. We were so close in nature and in spirit. We were baptized together by Elder R. P. Hendrix in 1951. She passed away December 17, 1975. We miss her so much.

Buna Mae Purvis

EXPERIENCE

Bellington, W. Va.,
Sept. 1912

Dear Brethren:—I will try to write you of some of my trials from childhood up to the present time, if the Lord will direct

my mind. My whole life has been one of many trials, yet God has kept me through all of them. My father died when I was quite young, and left my mother with six small children to do for, and as she was not able to keep us together, we had to be scattered. I can remember how bitterly I cried. I would see other children who had homes and parents, and would think, O if only my father could have lived. Sometimes I had very cruel treatment. When I was about eleven years old I went to stay with my grandparents. My grandfather was an Old School Baptist, and he took the *Signs*, and I would often read it. I loved to read the experiences, for I believed in the Old Baptist doctrine. My grandmother was a Methodist, and would say to me, "I do not know what makes you such an old Hardshell, when all your sisters and brother belong to the Methodists." But I believe the Lord was guiding me from my earliest recollection. I had a dread of death, and of the end of the world, and would often in my childish way try to pray and to be good, so that the Lord would save me, but it soon seemed to me that I was doing wrong; I thought that the devil was watching to devour me.

When I was about seventeen years old my grandfather died, and I was again left without a home. Then it seemed that I had no friends nor home. O the sad days that I passed through no tongue can tell. I wished that I were some little bird, or some beast, so that I would not be wandering over the world and have no place to stay, and if I were only a christian I would travel on toward my home in heaven, where I should always stay. I was so distressed it seemed that I could not live. It seemed to me that the sun did not shine right, and when I walked on the ground it seemed to be sinking under me. I would try to pray, but it seemed the more I tried the worse I became. O my wretched condition! I would gladly have exchanged places with some creeping thing of the earth, if

I could have done so, for I thought that they had no soul to be banished, while I had.

One day I went out a little way from the house, and it seemed that I could not live, and I said, O Lord, what is the matter with me? Then these words came very forcibly to my mind, "God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform." During that time I would look at the sun as it would be going down at night, and never expect to see it rise again. Some of the Old School Baptists came to see me, and I thought, If I could talk as they do I would be glad. I finally gave up and said, O Lord, I am in thy hands, do with me as thou pleasest. Then it seemed as if my burden was almost gone.

One day as I lay upon a sick bed I was thinking of the Baptists, and it seemed that there was a greater love in my heart for them than I had ever felt before. I wondered what it meant, and these words seemed spoken to me: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." It seemed to me that I did love them and wanted to be with them, but I felt too little and unworthy, still I could say with Ruth, "Entreat me not to leave thee, nor return from following after thee."

Soon I went to the church and was received and baptized. I felt to rejoice, and thought my troubles over and all my sorrows gone. I thought that joy and peace and pleasure would be my lot, but I soon found many doubts and fears, and often would ask, Am I Wrong? One thing I know: if I am saved it is by nothing good that I have done; it is through grace, and grace alone. I have eight children, but none of them belong to my church. O that the Lord would direct them in the way of truth and righteousness; but none save God can unstop the deaf ears and open the blind eyes. I would love to take the *Signs*, but am very poor so far as this world's goods are concerned, but I have a little hope that when done with this world I will

have a home not made with hands.

Dear brethren, if it will not crowd out better matter you may publish this in the *Signs*.

There is a place of peaceful rest,
Where we shall be forever blest;
Our bodies lie beneath the sod,
Our spirits then return to God.

O may I then with them be found,
When the last trump of God shall sound;
And worship at Immanuel's feet,
Where our joys will be complete.

O blessed thought, that we shall rise
To meet our Savior in the skies,
And ever there with him to be,
And peace and joy forever see.

O, Lord of love, look down today,
And guide me in the holy way,
And keep me in the narrow path
That leads to joy and peace at last.

There a place forever blest,
Where all the weary pilgrims rest;
They rest in their eternal home,
And never more on earth shall roam.

O what a meeting that will be,
When we in heaven our God shall see,
And ever there with him shall dwell,
And never hear the sound, farewell.

That awful day is drawing nigh,
When all that are alive must die;
Some go to their immortal home,
And some to their eternal doom.

Now I will close lest I weary you. May
God be with you and bless you.

Your unworthy sister, I hope, in
Christ,

Elizabeth Phillips

EXPERIENCE OF ELDER THOMAS TIPTON McQUEEN

Dear brethren and sisters, and kind friends: By request I shall attempt to write some of what I humbly hope the Most Holy Lord of all high heaven has been pleased to show me, a poor sinner. Realizing of a certainly that I am not able and unless it is His will on this occasion to be with me as the pen of a ready writer, it will only find it's place in the waste basket.

Jesus says, "Ye must be born again". This applies to all the redeemed of the Lord, and I certainly believe there is a time and that of the Lord, when each

and every one that was given Christ Jesus in the glorious covenant before time began, that they be born again, not of corruptible seed, but of an incorruptible, which liveth and abideth forever.

Dear brethren, I can well remember just now and moreover every day of my unprofitable life, where I was standing when I hope Jesus forgave my sins, which were as a great mountain before me. There came a great uneasiness over me some time during the year 1900. I did not know for what cause any more than I just thought that my time probably was very short. I realized in that botherment of burdens that death was appointed unto all men, and I was caused to have many serious thoughts concerning my eternal destination. I was forced to see that all my days had been evil. But I would try to comfort my troubles by stealing off and trying to pray the Lord to forgive me and with promises I would amend my doings for I verily thought I could begin a good work and the Lord would look over my past life, but pretty soon I found out if selfrighteousness was the way of salvation I was not able to be good, and that all that I had done was wrong.

Now in the spring of 1914 or on Saturday before the first Sunday in May, I went down under the hill to offer one more prayer, for I felt just like I wanted to offer one more, and after I arose to my feet, it looked like this had become a sin. I left there wringing my hands and groaning feeling just like I did not have a friend on earth, and that death and destruction was my doom, but I went on to the field to try to plow to keep from going with mother to church, for I felt ashamed to go anywhere. About 9 o'clock there was a light that seemed to light the whole elements and I saw, as it were, a large multitude of the people of God, Primitive Baptists, and they were singing "Amazing Grace", and I was standing before them in the most unworthy manner that could be

thought of saying, "Lord have mercy on me a sinner". Then I heard a voice say, "Peace, peace, peace". There I felt a forgiveness of sins, and was given a desire to live with the people I saw but could not feel worthy. I took out from the plow and went to Shiloh Church that day and heard Elder Berney Sawyer tell the brethren my life relating his own experience. This was the first gospel sermon I had ever really heard preached. I saw all the brethren and sisters with a clean garment on, and me, a poor sinner, with black and filthy hands and a feeble hope. I had desire to live with them, and felt just like I would be turned away. I went groping in this condition for four long years and three months, hoping for a sure token that I might feel willing to offer myself.

On a first Saturday there was three added to the church and I still could not go. I did not feel like church could receive me, and when I left the church after conference I felt just like I had let the last opportunity pass and that I was taking my last view of that place.

I did not feel like I could live. That night I dreamed I went to Shiloh Church, and the brethren were giving the right hand of fellowship, and I had stolen up near them. Elder Sawyer saw me, and told me to "Come up and go with us." "The Lord has set His table in the wilderness where there was none to help, and your plate is there". And I looked and saw the most beautiful table I ever saw, and just near it was a pool of water, and the brethren all came and gave me the right hand of fellowship, and I woke up praising the Almighty.

Dear readers, I was sure of this token. I did not feel worthy and do not yet, but humbly hope I was made willing to offer. My desire is like little Ruth, "Intreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God. Where thou diest I will die and there will I be

buried. The Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me". Yes the people, Primitive Baptist, preach salvation by grace through time and eternity, and that without works of the creature. Christ saved His bride, His people, His chosen elect ones that were given Him in the covenant of redemption before the world began, with an everlasting salvation, and when they are born again, they believe it.

There is a people that seems to think they can help the Lord a little. I find a scripture in Psalms 50:10,11, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for the world is mine and the fulness thereof".

God is not a conditional God. Job says, "He is of one mind and who can turn Him". In Isaiah 46:9-11 we read, "Remember the former things of old. For I am God and there is none else. I am God and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the ancient times, the things that are not yet done saying, My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure, calling a ravenous bird from the East the man that executeth my counsel from a far country, Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it I will also do it". No! God is not a weak God. He is as a consuming fire which burns up all Arminianism, and makes us trust in Him and Him alone.

Yes, we must be born again. Well, my letter is growing rather lengthy and I don't know that it will find a place any closer to the press than the waste basket.

Yours in Hope of Heaven and Immortal
Glory,
Elder T. T. McQueen
Frisco City, Alabama

FROM FLORIDA

Blountstown, Florida

Dear Brethren in the Lord,

I have enjoyed the *Signs of the*

Times for a long time.

My grandfather, Elder M. Murphy, preached the unsearchable riches of God for thirty years or more. He was moderator of Chipola Church in Calhoun County Florida for twenty-two years.

I was only a child of 9 years, when one Sunday his son, Elder J. B. Murphy, was down visiting us from Cottonwood, Alabama, on a Second Sunday in the month. There were five of us children (orphans) and I was the one who usually went to meeting with him. My uncle was in the stand and surely God had to be in the picture, for as he was preaching the wonderful gospel of God, I was one step ahead of him in his discourse until the end. It never occurred to me that that incident would ever return to me again, but as life went on with its ups and downs (and seemed mostly downs) and I began to have little experiences of grace. God caused me to know He had His hand on me from my earliest existence until now, for if justice had caught up with Me I would long since have ceased to be. I just can't praise and thank Him enough for all His tender mercies on me and my loved ones.

My experiences seem small when I hear others relate theirs, but oh thank God, I wouldn't exchange them for all the world and the fullness thereof. It was such sweet peace when God in His infinite power came to my rescue. The road had been so long and dark for me for about 13 years. No one can witness the feeling of elation of God's love but one He has spoken sweet peace to their soul. The world can never know its love.

Hymn No. 145 in Lloyd's Hymnal is truly my experience from the time I was baptized until now.

I would just love to say, Elder H. H. Chance of Altha, Fla., Calhoun County, baptized me on second Sunday in March, 1951. What sweet peace when I opened my eyes after being baptized and saw God's great hand reaching down

from Heaven for me. It has been such an uplifting of the Spirit when I get down in the valley.

Please keep publishing the *Signs of the Times*. They are uplifting to the little ones of which I hope I am one.

Pray for me when before the Throne of Grace.

Your little sister in hope of eternal life.

Edith Sewell

FROM ALABAMA

Greenville, Alabama

Dear Elder Williams,

Please renew my *Signs* for two years, and use the rest as needed.

Elder Williams, the Lord has been so good to me. I want to praise His Holy Name. Oh! this wonderful God, who is so good and kind, this great omnipotent God, who is so merciful to me a sinner. I'm not even worthy to call upon His Holy Name. If not deceived, I have a precious hope that He remembered me before the foundation of the world.

I love my Saviour God because He first loved me, even as I was dead in sins. "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love where with he loved us".

He has blessed me to live among the dear Primitive Baptist, unworthy tho I am. I'd rather be in their midst, than any place on this earth. There abides the sweet love and fellowship that flows from breast to breast. You are blessed to hear the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ preached in all its purity; the sweet message of salvation by grace, a finished work of a great and holy God.

Elder Sam H. Dean baptized a dear brother last September. The next morning I wrote a few words on baptism. Brother Bob Duncan was laid to rest in December. I believe God has prepared for him the best. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with

hands, eternal in the heavens”.

Please remember this worm of the dust before His throne. May God bless you is my prayer.

In bonds of love,
Emmie L. Grayson

PIGG RIVER
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION
1981

The 156th session of the Pigg River Association will convene with the church at Chapel the first Sunday in August, Friday and Saturday before. The dates are July 31, August 1, and August 2, 1981.

Chapel Church is located in Franklin County Virginia. Those coming by and from Martinsville go Route 108 to Route 890 (these merge at Figsboro). Go approximately 22 miles from Martinsville. Church will be on the right side. If coming from the North or East, go Route 40 to Route 890 at Penhook. Go about 10 miles. Watch for the signs.

Jamie E. Cooper
Association Clerk

It is a great mercy to enjoy the gospel of peace, but a greater to enjoy the peace of the gospel.

Dyer

FROM VIRGINIA

Henry, Virginia 24102

Dear Editors,

I am enclosing a check for renewal of the *Signs*. We regret that we are several

months late getting it in the mail. However, we appreciate your goodness in permitting us to still receive the paper.

My husband, Elder F. L. Clark, has had a very lengthy illness, for which he was hospitalized three times last year, and finally had surgery before Christmas. Thanks be unto God, he had made a wonderful recovery and has improved in different ways when it had seemed all hopes were gone. That which is impossible with man is possible with God.

Today, February 1st, marks Elder Clark's 89th birthday, which the Heavenly Father has blessed him to live to see. We are hoping if it can be God's will, that he may be able once again to meet with the saints of God; as it has been well over one year since he has been able to be at his home church.

We want to take this opportunity to try to express our appreciation to the brethren, sisters, neighbors, and friends, for the many visits, beautiful cards, gifts of money, and food given during our trying hours. We appreciate the prayers that were made in our behalf, and we feel beyond any doubt they reached Heaven. We find recorded in the Holy Writ where the children of Israel's cry reached Heaven while in bondage under Pharaoh's reign. The kindness and love that was manifested meant more than we can ever express. It was felt so wonderful in my breast, I desire to praise the Lord the rest of my days.

We want to extend a special thanks to Elder William Holland, Elder P. E. Ingram, Elder Amos Hash, Elder Roy Agee, Elder Donald Smith and others for the special concern and respect they have shown.

We will say "Farewell" and if my husband or I should meet with you "Highly favored few" no more this side of the grace and never ending eternity, we are living in that blessed hope of joining the number that John saw that

no man could number. Life's sun will soon set for us both, but Oh! what a glorious thought to awake at the dawn of a new day.

Praise the Lord, oh my soul. We desire the prayers of the Saints.

In Bonds of Love,
Elder and Mrs. F. L. Clark

Goldsboro, N.C.

Dear Brother Williams,

I sincerely apologize for your having to remind me of my subscription. According to the most recent date beside my name and address, the expiration date was 12/80 instead of 12/79. Enclosed is a check for one year renewal. Use the balance as you see fit.

About three weeks ago on a Monday morning I felt impressed to share some thoughts with the household of faith. There were two scriptures on my mind and I remembered having read them recently in the *Signs*. One I was able to find readily and it reads thus, "O, Lord God, thou knowest". (Ezekiel 37:3) The other scripture I was able to find several days later with the help of a dear sister. It reads, "Is there not a cause?"

The thought so much on my mind is that God knows all there is to know about us. Whatever the circumstances in our lives, some we rejoice in while others seem to crush us, it is a comfort when we can feel reconciled enough to say, "Is there not a cause?"

I read several comforting scriptures this special Monday. I say special because I believe there was sweet communion with the Lord. My mind was exercised on these topics - (1) The manner of person a child of God should be and desires to be (II Peter 3:11) (2) The stirring up of the pure mind which is the only way to worship God in pureness of heart and mind (II Peter 3:1); (3) the manner of love God has bestowed upon His children and the manner of love that should be expressed by us to God and each other (I John 3:1); (4) Everyone

hath a doctrine. I thought about the differences of opinions and beliefs concerning the scriptures. All these are not edifying and are different winds of doctrine which the child of God is warned against (I Cor. 14:26 and Eph. 4:14).

God does bless me so bountifully, yet I find myself depressed so much of the time. There are times when I am able to say, "O, Lord, God, thou knowest".

The membership at Pittman Grove has had my name on roll for twenty-nine years. How precious! I trust God has had my name from all eternity.

Love and prayers to you, my Christian friends. Please pray for me.

Dora Ellen Vick

EDITORIAL

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven".

This scripture is one of the most popular and often quoted scriptures to be found in the pages of inspired writing and yet I wonder how often people are blessed to really stop, analyze, and realize the depth of the wisdom contained in this short verse of scripture. It seems that this one verse, if completely expounded, would surely cover the whole of wisdom as revealed unto the saints of God as they journey in this time world. It states as simply and as matter of factly as only Wisdom can, the only way in which the heirs of God can come into possession of the kingdom of God. These are the words of the only begotten of the Father; the only Person born into this world with sufficient wisdom to declare the whole truth and the whole counsel of God. Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, who came unto Him in the darkness of human wisdom inquiring of Jesus, who He was; and regarding the kingdom of God. He stated, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a

teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him". And Jesus answered him with the above statement. In nature's darkness man cannot know the things of the kingdom of God.

For man to inhabit the earth he must be born into the world of nature in the way and manner that God has decreed for the population of this planet earth. It is according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of the eternal God of heaven and earth and is true of all except the first two. Adam was created of the dust of the ground and a rib removed from Adam's side was made Eve. When "God created man in His own image, male and female created he them", He said unto them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it". This has continued down thru the annals of time as children are born unto men according to the laws of nature. Each man, at the time appointed of the Father, has a beginning as a creature of flesh in his mother's womb, is separated from her and becomes an individual of the human race. This, in nature, is the way in which man is born into the world.

Man's being born into the world is in such a manner that the most intelligent or the most unlearned of men would concede that it was by no effort, thought or action on the part of the one being born. The one being born has no consciousness or knowledge of the world into which they are being born until they are a part of it. They have no opportunity to decide or to determine any of the circumstances into which they are born, no option as to race, sex, or physical form, and have no prior knowledge upon which to base such a decision if they had the opportunity.

This man that is so born into this world is of the earth, earthy, and has a knowledge only of the earthly kingdom and the things that he can learn by the use of his natural senses. Many are born into this world of the flesh and live few

or many years and die having known only those things of this natural physical kingdom of the flesh into which they were born.

I do not believe that Jesus just happened to use this illustration, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God", when talking to Nicodemus on this occasion. He was setting forth that basic truth that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned". The things of the spiritual kingdom are in a different realm from the things of the flesh and just as a man must be born of the flesh to be a part of the natural kingdom and know and realize the things pertaining thereto, so he must be born into the spiritual kingdom to see the things of the kingdom of God, and enter into it.

Jesus further tells Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the spirit." Nicodemus replied, "How can these things be." In nature's darkness, with only the wisdom of the world, man cannot understand the mysteries of the spiritual realm. The realization of a spiritual birth can only be known by those who have experienced it, in the same way that the natural man can understand his natural life by the experiencing of it. Until one is quickened by the Spirit and experienced the change of heart and mind his question will be the same as Nicodemus, "How can these things be".

The experiencing of having been born again was for the Apostles, on the day of Pentecost, and again it is referred to as compared to the wind like Jesus has said to Nicodemus. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from

heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the place where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance". What a wonderful experience of these Apostles and yet every child of God will acknowledge that there is a fellowship for these brethren because there is a degree of this same blessed revelation in their own experience. For the first time they understood the expression, "Ye must be born again". As fearful as it is to claim this precious heritage, you must acknowledge that your whole hope of eternal life is in the fact that you believe that you, too, have been born of the Spirit of God. As the Apostles began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, so did you. You began to speak of things you had not before. Your mind and your speech was of things that you had no knowledge of before. You may not have thought that you said very much, but those who have been there could see in your countenance, your conversation, and your careful fearful walk that you were alive unto the things of the Spirit. You, as they, no longer ran eagerly in pursuit of the fleshly pleasures of life. You had been born of the Spirit and your whole desire was to show forth the love that you had for God and for those of kindred spirit.

As on the day of Pentecost those round about the Apostles said, "What meaneth this?" They, as Nicodemus could not understand what was happening. Some mocked and some thought they were drunk. This is true today as each tells their experience they will invariably relate how friends and loved ones in nature became estranged and separated from them because they could not understand what had happened to the individual. They were left behind in nature's darkness to question and

wonder, "What meaneth this". They have no basis for comparison and therefore will never understand unless blessed by God with the same wonderful change from nature's darkness into the marvelous light and life of the children of God. This experience, I believe, is what Jesus is referring to as being born again. They are certainly made alive to the things of the Spirit and immediately have fellowship for all who have been quickened within their very heart and soul.

The Prophet Zephaniah records, "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent". This scripture was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost as the Apostles began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. There was no period of learning for the Apostles, they spoke it as soon as they were filled with the Holy Ghost in the same manner as when God breathed into Adam the breath of life and he became a living soul. It was instantly complete, a finished work, a new beginning, a new birth, if you please, and it is the sovereign work of the God who created the heavens and the earth. The pure language that they speak is the language of love, love for God and all His creation but especially for those who understand the language and speak it also. This is the joyful sound that the saints of God hear. *Psa. 89:15*, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted". This is the heritage of all that are born of God.

If man's being born into this natural realm is the sovereign work of God and Jesus uses this term in stating the only way that man can see kingdom of God is to be born again then it, too, must be the work of God alone. One is just as impossible, for the thing being born, as

the other, since the birth is the beginning and not a transition or transformation. It is the beginning of that which is born. Man will agree with you unanimously as regarding the natural birth and yet deny that this is true regarding the spiritual birth. They do not truly believe in God the Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent Creator of all things that are and do not believe the things that He says. They do not realize that when He speaks it is done and when He commands it stands fast regardless of whether all the wisdom and efforts of man are aligned with or against it. They will not concede that when He says something that it is true, absolute, no variance, and that it will be forever true whether it is believed by all or none of His creatures.

Jesus told the woman at the well, "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth". This confirms the necessity of all of the saints of God being born of the Spirit, since they were not created with a spiritual nature, originally. This is why it is such a wonderful experience when they are born of the Spirit and simultaneously realize the need and the full meaning of it. At that time they feel that the work is so complete that they will never be in the ruined undone condition again, but will ever praise and adore this Giver of every good and perfect gift for this mercy so graciously bestowed upon them. They learn though by experience that this is not the way that it is to be with them. Just as the baby in nature must experience a long and tedious learning process before it reaches maturity in becoming a man or woman, so must this new born child of grace also experience a long and tedious learning process and it will consume the rest of their natural life. They will grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but they will never reach full maturity in this life. That will only be realized when they are raised in the likeness of their Elder

Brother, when they will know even as they are known. This is reserved until they all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

They will never reach the fulness of maturity in this life, but this new birth is the beginning of a spiritual life that will reach full maturity in that world that will be. God does not begin a work that He will not finish. He does not quicken one to see it they meet certain standards. His work is only making manifest what was determined before the beginning of time and will stand when time is no more. It is to honor and glorify His Holy Name and to acknowledge the atoning work of the only begotten of the Father, in the sacrifice of Himself for the sins of all that were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.

The atonement has been made, the bride has been chosen, and being born again is but the manifestation of these truths in the heart of the individuals at the appointed time of the Father. The new birth is manifested in their walk, their talk, and their heart's desire being set on things above. They, for the first time, acknowledge the weakness and unprofitableness of the flesh and long for the time when they will reach maturity in the Spirit and lay aside the vanity and pride of this body of clay and dwell in the presence of God; in the fulness of His love and in the full knowledge of the glory and blessedness of that Kingdom into which they were born, while yet living in the body of flesh.

In bonds of love,
(Elder) Richard H. Campbell

FROM ALABAMA

Opp, Alabama

Dear Editors,

I see my subscription to the *Signs* expires with the March issue. Please renew my subscription for two years.

The *Signs* means so much to me since I can't hear the ministers when I go to the meetings, but I do enjoy fellowship with the Old Primitive Baptists. I have been attending their meetings all of my 88 years. I feel at home with them.

Best wishes to all. Use the extra as you see fit.

Eula M. Langford

Studio City, California

Dear Editors of the Signs of the Times:

Enclosed is a check for a two year renewal of the *Signs of the Times*. Use the balance as you see fit.

The monthly arrival of the *Signs* brightens up a somewhat dull life.

My brother is in the hospital dying of cancer. Please pray for him, together with all of like faith.

Love and best wished to all,
Mrs. Olive Moore

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

PREDESTINATION

Brother Lefferts:—I would like to have your views on absolute predestination of all things. If you think it will do no harm, you may answer through the *Signs* if you have time, and if not, all will be right with me.

Your brother, I hope.

J. J. Oakes

Penhook, Va.

Harsh things have been said of those who believe the doctrine of the absolute predestination of all things. These harsh things have arisen from misconception of views held by those who believe this doctrine. This doctrine was boldly advocated by the late Elder Gilbert Beebe, and was one of the several points of the Old School Baptist faith named in the original prospectus of the *Signs*, and for which this paper has always stood as an exponent. Naturally, therefore, it would seem out of order for one to

accept a place on the editorial staff on such a paper were he not in full sympathy with all points of doctrine for which the paper stands. On our part, we can say that we believe with all our heart in the doctrine of the absolute predestination of all things. Our boyhood and youth, and all our years since being a member of the church, have been spent among those who believe and preach this doctrine, and we have never heard it advocated as a cloak for sin, nor as excusing the sinner in his sins. It has never been preached by any one in our hearing so as to make one shudder with horror, but always as the rock of God's salvation of his people, and as the security of their well-being here and hereafter.

It has been charged against those who believe and preach this doctrine that they make God the author of sin. The advocacy of this doctrine, when rightly understood, does no such thing. Sin is the transgression of law. Where there is no law, there can be no transgression. God is under no law, is accountable to no one; being under no law, cannot transgress law, cannot therefore sin, hence is not the author of sin. Whatever God does is right, because he does it. We have no right to measure the Almighty by human standards of judgment. We are expressly told that the thoughts and ways of God are not the thoughts and ways of men, but are higher than men as the heavens are higher than the earth. How then can men judge the Lord? How possibly to do so with adequate justice and wisdom? "Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest." "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth." Men call the taking of human life by men, murder; they do not call it murder when God does it. When the Almighty through the activities of the forces of nature causes many human lives to be lost, as in earthquakes, tornadoes, electrical storms, &c., no rational being thinks of charging God

with murder. The breath of human life was God's gift in the beginning, therefore in the taking it when and where he pleases he takes but what is his own, and cannot hence be charged with murder or theft. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." But when a nation in the process of warring with another nation torpedoes the enemy's vessel, sending hundreds of lives to death, men call it wholesale murder. See the difference. When God takes human lives it cannot be murder, for he is above all law, cannot transgress law, does not therefore sin, cannot commit murder; but when man does these things it is wicked, sinful and wrong, and merits swift judgment and condemnation. And even though God wills that men should do these things, which he does, it still does not thereby make God chargeable with it, nor relieve men from their accountability to him for it. God willed the death of Jesus, and the manner of it, but held the Jewish nation accountable for it.

Absolute predestination of all things does not make God, cannot make God the author of sin; it does not relieve the guilty sinner of his guilt, nor make him any the less accountable to his Maker. To human reason, predestination and man's accountability do not harmonize; to faith, they accord perfectly. It has been claimed by some that the use of the word "absolute" is not necessary to be used in speaking of predestination, and that it is not a Bible word. Very true, and if the doctrine of predestination had never been expressed as being any other than absolute, the use of the word "absolute" would indeed be superfluous. But the tendency on the part of some to limit the Holy One of Israel, and to set bounds to his predestination, has made it necessary to use the word "absolute" to emphasize the predestination of God as extending to all things, and not only some things. Had limited predestination never been heard of, it would not be

necessary to bring forward the word "absolute" to offset it. For ourself, we rarely use the word "absolute" in speaking or writing on predestination, for our brethren know very well where we stand and what we believe concerning it, so that it is not necessary. Elder Beebe has been accused of originating the phrase, "absolute predestination of all things." This is an error. We find this same expression over and over again in Toplady's translation of Zanchius, and Toplady lived and died before Elder Beebe was born. Toplady lived contemporary with John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, and much that Toplady wrote was to show up the error of Wesley's teachings; therefore Toplady used the word "absolute" to emphasize the Bible sort of predestination as against the weak Arminian sort of predestination as taught by Wesley. For the same reason, Elder Beebe's ministry was fulfilled at the time of the split between the Bible Baptists and New Schoolism, and he used the word "absolute" to let people know he did not believe the flimsy sort of predestination claimed by the New Lights. It has been said that the use of this word "absolute" has been responsible for much of the division among Old School Baptists. We do not believe this, but that, on the other hand, the limiting of the predestination has given rise to the confusion, just as any attempt to limit God in any of his dealings with men will always alienate lovers of the truth from those that oppose it. Also, it is claimed that the word "predestination" is never used in the Scriptures but in reference to the people of God and their salvation. As to that the word "predestination" is not in the Bible at all, and the words "predestinate" and "predestinated" are found only in the eighth chapter of Romans and in the first chapter of Ephesians. But it is not the word that counts; what the word means is everything. The meaning involved in the word "predestination" is found all through

the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, its doctrine interwoven with everything the Scriptures teach.

We mean by the phrase, "absolute predestination of all things," that all things, both what men call good and that which they call evil, were determined beforehand of the Lord, and come to pass in accordance with his will to the fulfillment of his decreed purpose and end, and that anything, either good or evil, which God has not willed, and which he does not want, certainly cannot come to pass. The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain. If there is any of man's wrath which, if released, would not praise God, or which would tend to defeat the purpose of God, rest assured that measure of wrath will never find a vent. Though Paul does not use the words "absolute predestination" in the first chapter of Colossians, he preached it there stronger than any man has preached it since: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Could anything be stronger? Even the devil himself is a creature of God. For whether he be visible or invisible, a personal devil or merely the spirit of evil; whether he be in heaven or in earth; whether he be a throne, a dominion, a principality or a power, God made him, and made him for himself, that is, to suit his own ends and purposes. In that sense, even the devil is "good" in God's sight; not good in the divine or godly sense, but good for the purpose for which God intended him and for which God uses him. We classify things as being good or evil, but do we know what is really good and what is really evil?

Unless we could from some high pinnacle of omniscience view creation's dawn and its final wind-up, could we

be qualified to sit in judgment on any of time's events, condemning this as evil and approving that as good? The trouble with us is we are too entirely short-sighted, prone to jump to conclusions, prone to isolate a given event from all that precedes or follows it, and hastily to say, It is good, or it is bad. Nothing is either good or bad of itself; it is the thing or spirit with which it is associated, the company it keeps, that gives it its true character as being either truly good or wholly evil. Men living at the time that Joseph was sold into Egypt by his brethren, and judging that act by moral standards, would unhesitatingly condemn it as wrong. So it was wrong from the standpoint of Joseph's brethren, for their motive was an evil one, but God meant this very thing for good, "to save much people alive." God's purpose in this transaction was a righteous one; the purpose of Joseph's brethren in that same act was wicked. Therefore, the fact that God "meant" it, or determined it, did not at all make him the author of the sin, nor relieve the brethren from their guilt in it, even though God designed the act to have taken place exactly as it did.

The poet Milton and many others of the world's lights say that Satan is a fallen angel, that he was once in paradise, but fell from it or lost his first estate. Jude does say that there were angels that kept not their first estate, but he does not mean any such thing as this theology of Milton. Satan never was in paradise. He was always crooked. God did not make him straight at first and then he got crooked himself afterward. "His hand has formed the crooked serpent." He was made that way, never was straight. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."—John 8:44. Sometimes

we hear men say that God would not do this or that, that he does not do thus and so; or if God should do this or that he would not be just. Now, what do we know about what God has done, does or will do only as the Scriptures record the revelation of God's will in the past and yet to come? Man can never be judge of what God will do or of what he has done. We must take the Scriptures every time in the matters of this sort, and if man's wisdom contradicts, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." God called Moses to go to Pharaoh to bring forth his people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt, and then hardened Pharaoh from obeying him. Was that right? It certainly was if God chose to do it that way. Was Pharaoh guilty before God on account of the hardening? He certainly was, and deserved the death which ultimately fell to his lot. We have only to know that God does a thing to know that it is right. We have only to know that God punished a man to know that that man is guilty. And even though that man's guilt was before determined of God, and brought about in the way of God's providence, the man is still a sinner and worthy of all the punishment that God metes out to him.

The Lord told Shimei to curse David, and Shimei afterward died for it. He could not escape the consequence of his sin even though God told him to do it. It must be that even David himself knew that God had ordered he be cursed by Shimei, for David said: "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?" But his faith looked beyond the present evil to the ultimate good: It may be "that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." Morality revolts at the thought of David's putting Uriah in the forefront of the battle to insure his death, so that he (David) should have Uriah's wife for his own use. But this is the way Solomon had to be born. He could be born no other way; David, and

not Uriah, must be his father; that one woman, and no other, must be his mother. We say it could be no other way, for it was no other way, and could it have been some other way it would not have been this way. Nothing can be otherwise than it has been, nor could it have been, for it was not God's will to have it otherwise. Sufficient reason why it could not be otherwise. "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" How much, then, and what takes place among the inhabitants of the earth that is not according to God's will? Nothing. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will."—Prov. 21:1. If the hearts of kings, why not the hearts of other men? The Lord moved David to number Judah and Israel, and afterward condemned him for it. See 2 Samuel 24. Was it right for David to number the people? It was right for David to do whatever God told him to do. Did he sin in so doing? He most certainly did, as he afterward acknowledged: "I have sinned greatly in that I have done." Neither did he charge God with his guilt either in word or in thought.

It was God's will that King Ahab of Israel should fall at the hands of the Syrians, and to accomplish this the Lord sent a lying spirit into the mouths of Ahab's prophets, so that by their lies they should persuade Ahab to proceed in battle against the Syrians. Thus was his destruction accomplished. Was this right? It certainly was, because God did it. Whatsoever he does is right. But it would be wrong for me to lie even to deceive my enemy, and even if in the purpose of God I should do so he would be perfectly just in calling me to account for it. God held the hand of the heathen king Cyrus and prospered him in battle against Babylon to deliver the Israelites from captivity. But how came they into

captivity? As a consequence of their disobedience, of course. But was their disobedience an accident? The prophets in Israel and Judah had warned them again and again of their guilt, and called on them to repent, lest the captivity come upon them. But was there at any time a doubt as to whether they would repent or not? Certainly not, for their hearts were hardened, and they should not hear or understand. Who hardened them? The Lord. He has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Therefore, though the Lord hardened them from heeding the warnings of the prophets, did that make them any the less deserving of the ensuing captivity? Certainly not. And when God's will was accomplished in Babylon, he turned it over to Cyrus, that his people should be restored to their own land. Thus is proven how that the Lord forms light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates evil. (Isaiah 45:7). He creates the wicked for the day of evil, as when he before determined the crucifixion of Christ and ordained the wicked hands that did it. Nevertheless, he held them guilty and punished them. Does God bring people into the world with the design that they shall perish without salvation? See Romans 9:22, 23: "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?" The vessels of wrath were fitted to destruction, were made to be destroyed. Again: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Also Jude says: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men."

From the abundance of scriptural evidence we have cited (and much more could be deduced), we must conclude that both the elect and nonelect are in God's hands, and each go to the place before prepared for them; that both good and evil come from the same omnipotent hand; that neither is subject to chance nor subject to the whim, will or fancy of man. Just as there is nothing either good or ill but has its place in the plan and purpose of God from before the foundation of the world, so there is nothing too big or nothing too little to be comprehended by him. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing (one-fourth cent)? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." Now, when a sparrow, which is worth only one-eighth of a cent to man, cannot fall on the ground without the Father being concerned in it, we must admit that the providence and divine arrangement of the Almighty does certainly include even those things which we might consider to be of small importance or of no account at all. For our part, we can say with one Young: "There is not a fly but has had infinite wisdom concerned, not only in its structure, but in its destination." And with Toplady we agree: "Not a dust flies in a beaten road, but God raiseth it, conducts its uncertain motion, and, by his particular care conveys it to the certain place he had before appointed for it." We agree that the predestination of God is concerned only with those things that concern (in some way however remotely) the welfare of his people and the declaration of his glory. But how much is there that transpires in the world that is not in some way or other connected with the welfare of the elect, and with the glory of God? We believe that all the events that ever transpire in time are in some way links in the chain of God's predestination to accomplish the good of his children and the declaring of his glory. If all things were created by him and for

him, it must be so.

This subject is not done, nor ever will be if we should write on forever and forever, but we desist.

(Elder) H. H. Lefferts

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PINE CREEK MEETING
FLOYD COUNTY VIRGINIA

Pine Creek Primitive Baptist Church will again have all day services on July 4, 1981, the Lord willing. All lovers of the truth are invited to attend.

Anyone needing information or instructions to the meeting house should contact:

Elder Roy Agee
Route 1
Copper Hill, Virginia 34079
Telephone (703) 651-6783

STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

The one hundred fortieth session of the Staunton River Association will convene with the Church at Canaan on July 10, 11, 12th, which is the second weekend.

The church is located in Pittsylvania County, west of Danville, Virginia, on State Road 844. From Danville follow Highway 41 about 12 miles and turn left at Frances Store. The church is located about 3 miles on the right from this store. Watch for signs to direct you from Highway 41.

Burnell B. Williams
Association Clerk

OBITUARIES

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT

Be it resolved that we, the members of Monticello Primitive Baptist Church, with a humble heart do solemnly submit to our Lord's will in His calling home from this world of sin and sorrow our beloved Brother Scott Chrismon.

Brother Chrismon was 78 years old when he departed from this life on January 18, 1981. He was married to Sister Vallie Chrismon, who survives him. Also left to mourn him are their children, Pauline, Eleanor, Frances, Elmo, Thomas, and Dwight. Brother Chrismon united with the

Church in May, 1969, but attended regularly for many years before he joined. He was a dear and faithful member and a true believer of the gospel of Salvation by Grace.

He will be sadly missed by all, but we know that our loss is his eternal gain. Our prayers go out for his family. May the Lord bless them and give them comfort in their hour of need.

The funeral service was conducted at Lambeth Troxler Funeral Home by his pastor, Elder David V. Spangler, assisted by Elder Paul Lambe and Mr. Bill Sartin. His body was then laid to rest in Lakeview Memorial Park.

Be it resolved that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the *Signs of the Times*, one to his wife and family, and one retained for the church records.

Written at the request of his pastor and church members.

Shirley J. Donovan
Clerk, Monticello Primitive Baptist Church

MARJORIE M. SMITH

OCTOBER 4, 1906 SEPTEMBER 15, 1980

Sister Marjorie M. Smith was born in Pamlico County, North Carolina to W. M. and Barbara Etta Cayton Moreslender. While a young girl they moved to Beaufort County.

On January 10, 1925, she married Clemon W. Smith, Sr., who survives. To this union were born: Mrs. Thelma S. Tinker and Mrs. Vonnie S. Tinker both of RFD, Belhaven, N. C.; C. W. Smith, Jr. of Plymouth, N. C.; Jimmie Smith of RFD, Belhaven, N. C.; and, Mrs. Sallie S. Winstead of Kennewich, Washington all of whom survive.

Sister Marjorie asked for and received a home in North Creek Primitive Baptist Church second Saturday in March, 1967 and was baptized by her pastor, Elder W. E. Grimes.

Sister Marjorie's walk in life was a manifestation of the Godly humility and charitable heart that she was blessed to have. One such as she did not desire praise, nor would she appreciate any eulogy, but her talk was of her God, her family and the bretheren. Her seat was always filled in the church when she was able.

We all miss her very much; her seat is empty, her bereaved husband sits alone,

but none of us wish her back because we feel she is at rest with her Savior.

Her funeral was conducted by her pastor, Elder J. T. Prescott, assisted by Elder Reeves Smith.

The unusually large floral arrangements and the many friends attending the funeral showed the esteem in which she was held.

This obituary written by order of Conference.

J. T. Prescott, Moderator
Reeves Smith, Church Clerk

EMMA A. PARKER

The Lord has called our dear Sister Emma A. Parker home after a brief illness. She passed from among us on January 26, 1981 and was buried in Black Rock Church Cemetery, Butler, Maryland by her pastor, Elder John D. Wood, with the assistance of Elder James F. Poole.

Sister Emma was born 79 years ago, the daughter of the late Alfred and Merab Parker. She joined Ebenezer Primitive Baptist Church at Baltimore on June 6, 1926 and was baptized by the late Elder Joshua T. Rowe.

She served as the clerk for Ebenezer and Black Rock Churches for many years and faithfully attended both. She also was a trustee on the board of the Primitive Baptist Home.

Sister Emma is survived by one sister, Sister Evelyn Mason, Topping, Virginia and a niece, Mrs. Elizabeth Shipley of Catonsville.

Her sweet faith and love for the truth were evident to all who knew her and loved her. She will be greatly missed.

Peggy Osborne

OBITUARY

It pleased our Heavenly Father to call from our midst our husband and father, Harris Donaldson, on February 10. He has gone from his suffering and pain.

It was a sad loss for us left behind, but it was his eternal gain, for now he is free from the pain he suffered for the past several months.

Though he never united with the visible church, he firmly believed in an all Sovereign God, who has power over all on earth as it is

in Heaven. He had a great compassion for his fellowman.

He was afflicted with leukemia. He had been in and out of the Hospital well over a year, and was gradually getting weaker.

Harris was born near Star City, Ark. (Lincoln County) on October 8, 1912, to the late Robert W. and Estell (Majors) Donaldson. He lived most of his life in Lincoln County, where he and his wife were married in 1936. They were married by the late Elder H. H. Phillips, an Old School Baptist Elder.

He was a carpenter by trade until he retired.

His survivors include his wife, Veola (Womack) Donaldson, four sons, Leon and Wayne of Star City, Ark., Richard of Richland, Wa., Larry of Rison, Ark.; two sisters, Mrs. Marilyn Martin of Greer, S.C., Mrs. Margaret Newton of Shreveport, La; a brother, H. D. Donaldson, of Gould, Ark.; three sisters, Mrs. Jewel Owen and Mrs. Jean Kimbrough of Pine Bluff, Ark., Mrs. Corean Gibson of Star City, Ark.; eighteen grandchildren and two great grandchildren; other relatives and a host of friends.

Funeral services were conducted on Friday February 13, at 10:30 A.M. at Holly Springs Church, near Star City, by Elder G. W. Jones, and Elder David Turner, of Louisiana. It was a beautiful service. Burial was in Holly Springs Cemetery. Many many people, family and friends, paid their respect with their presence, their floral arrangements, and food and love gifts, cards, and letters. May we be made submissive to His will.

In hope,
Veola Donaldson & Family

ELIZABETH M. SADLER

AUGUST 15, 1881 JANUARY 26, 1981

Sister Lizzie as she was affectionately known was born in Pamlico County to Charles and Sarah Marslender, and had she lived until August 15th, would have been 100 years old.

Sister Lizzie was married to George Sadler on March 12, 1899 and to this union 12 children were born. Five died in infancy and two sons, Alton and Julian died just a few years prior to their mother. Her husband

died December 3, 1966. She is survived by: Durwood Sadler of Williamston, N.C.; four daughters, Mrs. Edna Selby, Mrs. Emma Sparrow, Mrs. Lula Sparrow and Mrs. Dorothy Sparrow all of Route 2, Belhaven, N.C. and a great number of grandchildren, great grandchildren and great great grandchildren.

Sister Lizzie united with North Creek Primitive Baptist Church Saturday before the second Sunday in May, 1949 and she missed very few meetings until about a year or so before her death. This writer along with her pastor visited her and she would always express her love for the brethern and her desire to go back to her meetings. The last few years that she attended church, her hearing became impaired, and so much of the service she could not understand, but her countenance would light up when she entered the church and her smile would tell you that she loved everyone there.

Both Sister Lizzie and her husband were very charitable. I have been told by many there was always room at their table for anyone, especially children who were hungry.

During the last few years of Sister Lizzie's life, she lived mostly with her daughters and more gracious children I have never known. They did all that anyone could possibly do, and while they were not members of their mother's church, they always prepared large lunches for her when lunch was spread at her church.

Her family will miss her; we at church miss her. Her "I am very well, thank you" will not be heard anymore, but her walk in this life and the many years we were blest to be with her seem to proclaim that she has at last arrived in that celestial city whose builder and maker is God.

Her funeral was conducted by her pastor Elder J. T. Prescott and the large floral arrangements and many friends present attested to the love that was hers. She was laid to rest beside her husband in the church cemetery, there to await the redemption of these bodies, when she will hear that precious voice saying "Come ye blest of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world".

By order of conference
J. T. Prescott-Moderator
Reeves O. Smith-Clerk

Signs of the Times

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"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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THE EARLY RELIGIOUS LIFE OF
ELDER DAVID BARTLEY,
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCTION

The Gentle Reader may want to know the motive and aim of the author in offering this humble tribute to the brotherhood; therefore I may briefly say, the motive is neither ambitious nor selfish, but to glorify God; and the aim is, to both admonish and encourage His dear and loving children, especially the young soldiers of the Cross.

I have been moved to write this outline of my early life in testimony of the righteousness, mercifulness and faithfulness of God. His long-suffering and goodness both in Providence and Grace, in His hand-dealings with me, will be plainly seen by the spiritual and observant reader.

Above all, the events herein narrated clearly show that There is A God - the true and living God, they also show that, "if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself".

We may go astray and wander far out of the way, yet never beyond the limit and power of the most High. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me". Truly did I find it so in my lost estate, and in my wanderings from the footsteps of the good Shepherd; for He went after me, and brought me back to His fold.

The young minister of the gospel, who may be tempted to flee from the cross, should learn from my painful afflictions and merited chastisements, that "to obey is better than sacrifice", and in keeping the Lord's loving commandments there is a blessed reward of comfort and peace and rest to the soul.

Finally, I desire to leave behind me this Ebenezer of praise to the precious Savior and loving Master, as a testimony to my dear family and brethren all, that He is abundantly able and willing and faithful to save them to the uttermost—even from sin and death and the lowest hell—that come unto God by Him; yea, that the Lord Jesus, the faithful and almighty Shepherd, will never suffer one of His little ones to perish, but will in the end bring us all off more than conquerors over the last enemy, and raise us up to His blessed and holy Heaven.

David Bartley
Crawfordsville, Ind. September, 1896

EARLY RELIGIOUS LIFE

CHAPTER I.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS

This is the forty-second return of my spiritual birthday, which gracious and blessed event was on the 25th of April, 1854; therefore, my mind is moved to begin a relation of my early religious life on this memorable anniversary of the happy day when my spirit first rejoiced in God my Savior, who then reconciled me to Himself in Jesus Christ, His beloved Son and my loving Redeemer.

The next day was my twenty-seventh natural birthday. Both events were in the state of Ohio, and near the beautiful Ohio River.

My beloved parents were Elder John P. and Charity Bartley, and I was their ninth child and sixth son, born unto them the 26th of April, 1827, in their farm home, about eighty miles above the city of Cincinnati. My father was then, and until his departure, a highly esteemed Primitive Baptist Elder or

minister, and my amiable mother a faithful member. When I was about three years old my parents moved, with their large family of children, to their new farm home in central Indiana, where I grew up to manhood.

My beloved mother, so much like her name (Charity), was taken home to her Father in heaven, after a lingering illness of six months, when I was a little lad. In her sickness I was her daily waiting-boy, as I was too small to work on the farm; and I remember how kind and gentle, affectionate and patient she was in it all.

In my early boyhood days my budding mind was often seriously impressed with thoughts of my future destiny, of God and eternity; and I was wont to look into the starry heavens with wonder and awe; for even then I felt that I was a stranger, in a strange and mysterious world.

One harvest time, at about the age of ten, I fell very sick, and seemed to be gliding down a steep and black mountain, with nothing beneath my feet but moving gravel, carrying me slowly down-down into a yawning abyss as black as night. This would startle and alarm me, for I feared it was my omen of my death, and that I must sink down into the bottomless pit. But as I grew on in years, I regarded death as far in the distance, and flattered myself that I should prepare to meet it and make my peace with God when I grew up and had enjoyed the pleasures of life. My idea was that I was quite a good, moral boy, having a good heart, and only a few outward sins, of small amount, which I could and should leave off before I came up with death, and then God would be pleased with me. As time went on I became somewhat religious—yet let no one else know it. With some small exceptions, I really thought that I was pleasing God. Being subject to occasional headaches, I thought it was a punishment for some little wrong; therefore, I would silently ask Him to let

me know when I displeased Him by causing me to have a headache as a warning to me, so that I might do right.

Father taught us children to read the Bible on Sundays and nights, and he would read with us, when not away preaching. It was his wont, too, to read a chapter to the family and pray before retiring for the night. On those occasions he would talk reverently to us of God our Maker, of our accountability to Him, and of judgment. This deeply impressed my young mind, and imbued me with a feeling of awe and reverence for the Creator - a feeling of fear and dread, I may say, rather than of love. In this way, too, I became somewhat familiar with the letter of the Scriptures, for which I have ever felt grateful. I regarded my father as the best man on earth, and I also had a reverential regard for his fellow-preachers, who often visited our home, and many of them preached there. I believed then, as now, that they were the servants of the Lord. Moreover, from my Scripture reading, as well as from hearing their conversation and preaching, I fully believed (as I thought) the doctrine they held, as to the way of salvation--that it is of the Lord and by His grace.

In my early youth my eldest brother, Mordecai, left the parental roof and settled in Jasper County, Illinois, and after some time he came near dying with typhus fever, but was raised up to health again. He then wrote our father a long letter, giving his deep religious experience and telling of the sweet forgiveness of his sins and the peace and joy of his heart, at a time when his young wife and others were weeping around his bed, and thought he was dying--telling, too, that he was then so happy in the Lord that he longed to depart and be with his blessed Savior.

In this letter he said to father, "Tell Carleton and Sophia Universalism may do to live by, but it will not do to die by". (They were our eldest sister and her husband, Mr. Carleton Avery.) After

receiving this letter dear father called all the family in at night and read it aloud with deep and joyful emotion, for we had all sorrowfully expected to hear of Mordecai's death.

After retiring that night I could not sleep for some time, for I knew that the Lord had saved and blessed dear Mordecai; but I knew just as well that I had no Christian experience, and that the Lord only could make me a Christian. O, how I wished I were saved, like Mordecai! But, alas! I then felt that I was only a natural boy.

Let me here speak of my sainted sister. With father and mother, she was a member of the dear old home church--Conn's Creek; also her husband. But he and his father's family had been carried off by the Universalists: and, after long persuasion, my sister also went with them. Still, she and her husband would attend father's meetings, and then go home with him. Mr. Avery was a quiet man; but she became a zealous advocate of Universalism, and this had gone on a few years, until father was so tired with her that he seldom visited their home, wishing to avoid any further controversy with her.

As was usual, they were both at our house at the Baptist meeting time, with quite a company of Baptists. On Sunday morning all were having a good religious conversation in the large sitting-room. The boy David was in the rear listening, and near me were Carleton and Sophia. She was turning the pages of Wilson Thompson's hymn book, and her anxiety to talk attracted my attention. As soon as there was a pause in the conversation she spoke to father, who sat near, and read to him a verse on free grace. She then said; "Free, indeed! If it was free, it would be for everybody". For some minutes she went on with her argument, but no one replied, and she ceased. Then father, his voice tremulous with deep feeling, said: "Sophia we all used to believe you was a subject of grace. I remember how you

told your experience to the church, and I baptized you, and how you used to encourage me to go on and preach the doctrine of grace, even stronger than I did, telling me that it was the truth. But now, you have opposed it so long, I have become discouraged, and fear that we were all deceived in you, Sophia, and that you are a stranger to grace. You know that I have almost quit going to your house, for I have been so tired with your opposition and contention that I have resolved to talk with you no more on the subject”.

All were astonished at the touching effect of this, for she began and penitently said to father that she could not harden her heart and hold out against the truth any longer; for she loved them all as the Lord's people, envied them their happiness and wanted them to forgive her if they could. She said, “You know, papa, that I have gone to the meetings of the church all along, and have come home with you, for I could not resist the desire to go. And I have often told Mr. Avery that there is more love among the Old Baptists than any other people. It touches my heart to hear old father Jones there say, ‘My dear brethren’. I have tried to believe Universalism, but I can't hold out any longer”.

She was calm and tender while she made this good confession, but father and his dear brethren were in tears of joy. Although I was nothing more than a natural boy then, yet I shall never forget that very pathetic and touching scene. Mr. Avery sat mute and with a downcast look. He never returned to the church.

The church gladly restored my sister to fellowship, and she never again wavered in her faith, but was ever after a true and faithful member, until the God of all grace called her to the church on high, where I trust to see her again and with her wear the crown of life, which the Lord will give unto all that love Him.

CHAPTER II. FOUND GUILTY

The second Sunday of November, 1844, was the solemn day of my awakening and conviction. As was my custom, I had gone to the old church. The old hewed-log meeting house stood on an eminence near the present town of Saint Paul. I had walked there with a light heart, and life was very bright and inviting to my view. While I respected religious worship, my motive in going was to see my young friends and pass away the day pleasantly.

Sitting there alone in the front and middle tier of seats I was an indifferent listener to my father's sermon until near the close, when he quoted the words of Jesus, “The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder”. Father said that that stone was Christ, and the sinner that fell upon Him was broken-hearted and broken off from the law; but if we were not built on Christ we were yet in our sins and enemies to God. A silent voice echoed the words in my inmost being: “You are not built upon Christ; you are yet in your sins and an enemy to God”. As by the vivid flash of the consuming lightning, I saw and felt and knew this awful truth, and wondered how I had been so blind that I had not seen it before. My sinful and guilty soul was fearfully exposed to my own view, and, as I thought, to the view of my father and all in the house. I sat there wofully smitten and blasted under the wrath of the just and holy law of God. My head sank upon my chest and the tears unbidden fell fast from my eyes. I wanted to arise and leave the house, but could not. My condemnation and the anguish of my spirit were fearful. I thought of the wicked company in the camp of the Israelites whom the earth swallowed up, and feared that I should

thus sink down into perdition in the sight of all the congregation; for I felt that God was about to cut me off in my sins and that His just vengeance was burning against me. But He has ever been better than my fears.

The meeting ended and I went out with the rest, but could not raise my head nor speak to any one. As I stood there alone Miss Charlotte Avery laughingly said to a group of young friends: "Just look at David! I do believe he is trying to be religious". Many years afterward she told me that she remembered that event, and how she regretted speaking in jest.

That night I sought the woods, and for the first time in my young life knelt down in prayer, and with many tears implored God to have mercy upon me and pardon my sins. This was only the beginning of soul-trouble and sorrow; for many weeks and months slowly passed, until year after year was numbered, yet I was not pardoned and saved.

Not many days after the Lord thus opened my blind eyes I tried to persuade myself that it was all the work of Satan, and not the work of the Lord. Thus did I reason: "I am quite young and have not been a bad boy; therefore, why should I feel so deeply troubled and miserable? I will banish these gloomily forebodings, be cheerful and lighthearted, as before, and enjoy myself with my young associates again". For I thought that if this was the Lord's work of conversion, I should be made to feel better and that I was getting good instead of so wretched and bad. But I found it impossible for me to be as before that solemn Sunday; for I would forget my surroundings and my work, and would be aroused and startled by the involuntary outcry of my suffering heart: "Oh, my sins! my cruel sins!"

Finding that it was impossible for me to be mirthful and happy again, or to escape from my heavy burden of sin and

guilt, I then besought the Lord more earnestly in prayer, going off to myself at every opportunity, both day and night, to pour out my sorrowful complaints in His ears, weepingly confess my sins, and implore His forgiveness and mercy. Yet all my efforts brought no relief. As time thus went mournfully on, and God seemed not to hear me nor answer my heart-breaking cries for mercy, it occurred to me, when in the woods and on my knees, that I had not abased myself sufficiently before Him, and that if I would prostrate my body upon the earth He might hear my prayer and forgive my sins. Then I cast myself on the leaves, wept and prayed in the bitter anguish of my soul, but this gave me no relief. I could not see that in all my efforts I was still trusting in something that I must do, and expecting the God of salvation to reward me for it. How ignorant I was for grace! At times there would be some abatement of my deep trouble and mourning for a season, but only to return, and then I would feel worse, because I had been careless about my lost condition.

My father took the Signs of the Times, in which I often read of others finding pardon and peace, after a short time of sorrow and mourning, and this led me to think there was no forgiveness for me, or God would have heard my cries. Still, I could not help going off alone to weep, lament and pray, for this was the only way that I could give vent to the oppressive burden and sorrow of my heart. Sometimes I would take the Testament with me in the lonely woods on Sundays, and in deep sympathy sit and read the life of the innocent Son of God, and weep over His cruel persecutions and death, and I wondered why it should have been so.

At last it was awfully certain to me that I was hopelessly lost forever, and was a reprobate, for whom there was no salvation. So terrible was this

conviction I would wander away to myself, walk to and fro, wring my hands and lament aloud under the anguish of despair, fearing reason would forsake me. It seemed to me that my time was short, and then to endless woe I must go. I would piteously plead with God to grant me a place there away from the wicked, where I should not hear His Holy Name blasphemed. For O, I was sick of sin, and loathed it and myself! I wished that I had never been born, or had died in infancy. But all my regrets were unavailing, and it was impossible for me to escape from myself, or change my state.

I wish to go back to the autumn of 1846 and speak of a dangerous attack of a malignant fever, which came near carrying me off. The terror of my mind was so intense that I could not conceal it, and my father noticed it and kindly chided my, saying: "David, if you have to die, meet death with fortitude". This only added to my alarm and dismay, for it convinced me that father despaired of my recovery; and to die unprepared, sinful, guilty, and condemned as I was, overwhelmed my soul in horror, and I could have no fortitude to meet a doom so appalling, for the black despair of my soul was unutterable, and piteous my terror. Yet I could not bear the thought of telling my father or anyone of the awful state I was in; for it seemed too horrible for any one to know of it.

One evening, during my convalescence, my older brother John and my step-sister Jane sat in the open door of my room and sang:

"Awakened by Sinai's awful sound,

My soul in guild and thrall I found," etc.

This hymn seemed to seal my awful state, and I most keenly felt the fearful truth of the last lines of each stanza:

"The sinner must be born again,

Or sink to endless woe".

My soul shuddered at these solemn words, for I well knew that I was not born again, but my brother and sister knew nothing of the torture they innocently inflicted upon me.

My dear brother John peacefully departed in the triumphant faith of Jesus years ago. It was my sadly sweet privilege to preach on the occasion of his funeral, by his request. Before he fell asleep in Jesus, the resurrection and the life, he told our brother Joseph of his abiding faith and hope in the precious Christ, and that he was peacefully reconciled and willing to depart, only he regretted that his feeling of great unworthiness had hindered him from following his Lord and Master in gospel baptism, which he had long desired to do.

(Continued next month)

Dear Brethren Editors:

The time is here for me to renew my subscription to the Signs and I am enclosing amount necessary for one year and a little extra to use as you see fit.

The dear *Signs* has been coming to my family for over a hundred years - my grandfather took it, then my father, and now I have been a subscriber for many years. I have in my home quite a number of old copies that have been handed down to me, in the early 1900's, 1920's and 1930's. Every once in a while I get some of them out and enjoy reading the writers' articles penned down in those years, some of which I met personally in my early childhood, but their memory still lingers with me. Right now I call to mind two in particular of the old writers, Elders I. R. Greathouse, and J. F. Beeman. Both visited in our home from time to time prior to their passing on to their rest. I have just read the April 1926 issue which contained the obituary of my mother, who passed away in 1924 and my brother who passed away in 1925 at the age of 7 years. Elder Greathouse conducted the funeral of my brother and wrote both of the obituaries.

In the late 1940's or early 1950's we were blessed to have dear Elder Lefferts and Elder Spangler and their

companions to visit our church and in our home near Plant City, Florida, where we were living at the time. The sweet talks and messages they were blessed to deliver lingers in our memory to this present time. Brother Spangler, do you recall the appointment you had at Mt. Enon Church? It was such a precious visit. We have moved around quite a bit since that time and as you can see, we now live in Shreveport, La.

While I do not say I am an "old man", I have been on this earth almost 67 years, and this year will observe my 50th year among the Old School Primitive Baptists. I have been through many trails and tribulations, but truly the Lord has been good to me all the days of my life and I hope I can say with the poet

"Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home."

We hope and trust the dear Lord will continue to enable you to publish the *Signs* and others to follow you. Brother Spangler, I say this to you, personally, because we have met you and though it has been many years we still think about your visit. May the Lord continue to bless you and we ask an interest in your prayers.

Farewell in the Lord.

A poor sinner saved by grace,
Robert L. Miles

S. Charleston, W. Va.

Dear Editors:

Please renew my subscription for another year to the *Signs*. Use the rest as needed.

I wait eagerly each month for my copy to arrive. I feel it is a God sent paper to console the hearts of His poor sinladen people.

I enjoy all the articles but the poem by Elder J. C. Sikes in the March issue of this year is outstanding. It is God's word as a whole wrapped up in one poem. I have read and reread it over many times, getting so much comfort from it each time.

May God bless all of you to continue sending out His blessed truth.

A sister in sweet hope,
Mrs. Lester Haning

A MONUMENT OF GRACE

Messrs. Editors, -- At the age of fourteen I entered a gentleman's service, as foot boy, and afterwards lived in several large families of distinction. I drank deep into all the sin and folly which is too frequently practiced in great families. In 1839, in the 39th year of my age, I was living butler in a gay family in the North Riding of Yorkshire, where I had been ten years. My master was the brother of a noble lord, and my mistress the daughter of a noble duke. Being at this time a tolerably moral man, I thought myself a good man, and regularly attended church and the sacrament. But, as I now believe in my soul, the set time to favour Zion was come. The Lord laid his afflicting hand upon me, by taking from me my wife, during child birth. As I was very much attached to her, this was a heavy blow. I wandered in the woods and fields, grieving, and asking myself what had done that I should be so afflicted. My distress increased; and, for nearly four months, I tried to get rid of it, by going to public houses and frequenting company, but this made me worse. I could not sleep at night, but often got out of bed to pray, but to whom, at that time, I knew not. I became very weak, and my employers and fellow servants looked upon me as an object of pity, thinking that my grief was in consequence of my bereavement. But the arrow of conviction had entered into my soul, and I was driven almost to despair; crying, sighing, groaning, and praying, night and day. At length, on the 4th of August, 1839, (O, never-to-be-forgotten day!) while pacing my room, about ten o'clock in the morning, I heard a voice say to me, "Look unto me, and be ye saved", and, at the same moment, I saw

Jesus upon the cross (We presume with the eye of faith. Editors) as plain as I now see this paper before me. I can affirm that I heard the voice, saw Jesus, and felt the power; and the tears of godly sorrow which followed no tongue can tell or pen describe. I can testify to the truth of this scripture, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn". I knew my sins were all forgiven through Jesus Christ, and I exclaimed, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted". At this time the parable of the prodigal son broke in upon my soul with almighty power, and I was feasted upon it day and night for a fortnight. I now began to preach Jesus in the house and amongst my neighbours. I thought I was going to convert many of them, and if they appeared serious I considered the work was half done. When the family was from home I got all the servants to prayer, but my mistress soon put a stop to that when she returned, but I continued to pray for them all, in my own bedroom, for hours together. O what a spirit of persecution did my childish folly bring upon me! My mistress cautioned the servants against listening to me, as I was gone mad. My master told me the servants were all complaining that they could not live with me, as I was always talking about religion, and charged me not to do so. I said I was sure that if I held my peace the stones would cry out. Out of fourteen persons in the house, the housekeeper and kitchen maid were the only persons who did not persecute me. I thought they were my converts. At this time all my sins passed before my eyes like a panoramic view, but I felt no guilt. I was now brought into contact with three clergymen. O how the devil raged in them; they called me insane, and told my master that I was gone mad. How these learned parsons did try to confound me with their Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, but all to no purpose, for my new Master gave me, a poor illiterate

fool, words and wisdom which all their college wisdom could not resist. One parson asked me why I should flatter myself that God should have conferred such a favour on me more than my neighbours? I went to church a few times after this, and O how these hirelings did level their guns at me. I many times fell flat upon my face, in my bedroom, so astonished that God should enable me to stand fearless in the presence of these parsons and my employers, and put such words into my mouth to speak unto them.

I was next charged by a popish priest with driving one of his followers mad. He said that I ought to be sent to prison, and went to a certain Catholic duchess, to get her to write to my employers, stating that I was mad and a dangerous character. The devil set on me in consequence of this hot persecution, but the dear Lord soon put all to rights with these words, "I have chosen thee out of the world, therefore the world hateth thee". Soon after this the dear Lord gave me these words, with great power, which followed me for several days, "Count the cost". I felt sure that some fresh trial awaited me, but the words gave me such support that I did not fear. But alas! I did not "count the cost", for my religion has cost me much more than I reckoned for. O, this stripping, inside and out, is painful to flesh and blood! In April, 1840, my master called me into his room; he told me that he was sorry to part with me, not having a single fault to find with me, except my new religion. I believe that my employers had some respect for me before the Lord called me, as the day my dear wife was buried, my master and mistress attended her funeral, and my mistress stood sponsor the same day for my dear baby, when the parson gave it the mark of the beast in the forehead. One trial I met with before I left the family, which was, the practice which is followed, in high life, of ordering servants to say the family are not at home when they are. This is what Mrs.

Opie calls white lying, but, to my conscience, now made tender, it appeared very black lying. My mistress having told all the great folks of her acquaintance that I was gone mad, they seemed half afraid of me when I opened the door. How my soul did pity them, in their fine carriages!

In May, my master discharged me, after eleven years' servitude, telling me at the same time I had turned his house and neighbourhood upside down. This scripture came to my mind with power, "They that have turned the world upside down are come here also". I said, "Sir, unless you know something of this turning upside down before you die, where God is you cannot come". I now left the Church, and joined the Primitive Methodists, or free-will ranters, and so jumped out of the frying pan into the fire, for they set me to work for Christian perfection, and to convert the whole world, yes, even the reprobate part. I bless the Lord he soon brought me from amongst them. At this time I thought all who could talk about religion were religious, and so used to cast my precious pearls freely before swine. I now began to be much concerned about my father's soul, and a very popular church parson set me to work to pray for him, saying that God heard the prayers of a son for a father. O, the hours I prayed for him! but alas! he is now eighty years of age, and, I fear, dead in sin.

From August, 1839, to December 1840, I enjoyed much of the dear Lord's presence, and many sweet seasons in prayer, both public and private. But now came the weaning time. One night, when I went to bed, I enjoyed the Lord's presence in prayer, but when I woke the next morning my best and dearest friend was fled, and left an aching void, which the world, or all that man calls great or good, can never fill. O, what distress of soul I was in! I was afraid that I was deluded. I tried to pray many times a day but could not. I had just

commenced business, but my distress of soul was so great that I could not attend to it. I sought out many professors of religion, of different denominations, but none of them understood my complaint. I went to two Baptist preachers, and told them my distress. One of these men told me to exercise faith, and to look out of myself unto Christ; the other asked me if I prayed, and when I told him that I tried to pray twenty times a day but could not, he said, "You give place to the devil, and it is written, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you'." Thus the devil, in these blind guides, makes use of scripture to distress a poor soul. I thought, as they were preachers, that they must be right, and myself a deluded character. I was next induced to join a class of professors conducted by the before-mentioned popular Church parson. I attended twice, but found only "death in the pot". I knew not what to do, and as I could find no religious professor who understood my complaint, I thought there never was any one like me. It now came into my mind that, four or five years before, I heard of an old acquaintance, a sailor in his early life, who it was reported had gone mad in consequence of religion, and had become a preacher. I thought that perhaps his madness was something like mine, and I endeavoured to find him out, which I soon did, and fell into conversation with him about religion. Indeed I could talk on no other subject. He seemed to eye me with a jealous look, but when I told him my distress of mind, and he heard my suppressed sighs, he said, "I am glad of your soul trouble; I have been in it myself; these are the trials and straits which all the Lord's people are brought into". I found that this poor old sailor understood my complaint, and I felt a union to him. He then began to explain the difference between law and gospel, which I had never heard before, but when he spoke about the doctrine of election, and the safety of the elect, I got

out of his company as soon as I could, ran home, and upon my knees, in my bedroom, I besought the Lord to keep me evermore out of his company, so awful did the doctrine appear to me, but from him I could not keep. Every time he spoke of empty professors, (as I did not think then that there were any) and election, I ran home, praying to be kept from him; yet I loved the man. At length the dear Lord made matters right with these two portions of his holy word being applied with power, "Every imagination of the thought of the heart is evil, and that continually", and "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me". The first cut up all my duties, and showed me they were nothing worth; the latter convinced me of the truth of the glorious doctrine of election, and of the security of the elect.

I desire to praise God the Father for choosing me, a sinful worm, before time; I desire to give equal praise to God the Son for redeeming me; and also to the blessed Spirit for quickening me. I bless the dear Lord for using this poor old sailor as an instrument in removing that heavy burden from my heart, which had so long oppressed me. When I was first called I thought I should have gone smoothly to my grave, but the Lord the Spirit has, in some measure, taught me the plague of my wretched heart. As to the Lord's dealings with me in Providence since my call by grace, my path has been much crossed in all I have put my hand to; my way is hedged up on all sides, and, in fits of rebellion, darkness, and unbelief, I often say, "All these things are against me." Many have been my days of darkness, and often has the devil presented to my mind poverty, a prison, and a workhouse. I do indeed feel myself a poor, blind, ignorant fool, but at the same time there is a secret something which sweetens all my cares. I was soon led to see that believer's baptism was a divine command, and I desired to add my

feeble testimony in defence of that much-despised ordinance. The dear Lord met with and blessed my soul while obeying his commands, so that I found that "to obey is better than sacrifice", and "in keeping his commands there is great reward". I am now joined in church fellowship to very few, very poor, much despised, and persecuted people, the old sailor being one of the door-keepers.

May the God of Jacob bless you in your labour of love, and enable you to lift up the "Gospel Standard".

So prays yours in truth alone,
J. W. T.

Feb. 21, 1843

The Gospel Standard, July 1843

ORDINATION

At the request of Goose Creek Island Primitive Baptist Church, a presbytery was called to examine Brother Jesse Foreman and Brother Joshua Potter and if in their judgement they are qualified, to ordain them as deacons.

The presbytery was composed of Elder Oliver Allen, Elder Sam Jones, Elder J. T. Prescott and Elder Reeves Smith. Deacons present were Bretheren Virgil Gaskill, George Willis, Sims Brickhouse, Earna Marslender and Steadman Brown.

Elder Prescott began the services with hymn and prayer, after which Elder Allen was chosen Moderator and Elder Reeves Smith, Clerk. Elder Prescott was appointed to question the candidates; Elder Sam Jones was appointed to give the ordination prayer; Elder Allen was appointed to give the charge; and, Deacons Virgil Gaskill and Earna Marslender were appointed to present the candidates to the presbytery.

Elder Prescott states that he accepts the judgement of the church, along with his personal knowledge of both men, that they are qualified for the office of deacon.

Elder Allen read 1st Timothy 3rd chapter 8th through 13th verse in his charge to the candidates.

The Ordination prayer by Elder Sam Jones was very touching, begging that they be kept by the Holy Spirit.

Their wives were called forth and asked to

support their husbands in what lay ahead.

A motion was made that the minutes of this meeting be read, second and agreed.

A motion was made that the minutes be received as read, second and agreed.

A motion was made to present both men back to the church as duly ordained deacons, second and agreed.

This meeting was dismissed with prayer by Elder Reeves Smith.

Elder Oliver Allen-Moderator
Elder Reeves Smith-Clerk

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

On March 22, 1981, pursuant to a call heretofore sent out by Rehobeth Church for a presbytery to meet on this date for the purpose of the ordination of Brother Doyle Murphy to the office of Deacon of Rehobeth Church, the following Elders and Deacons met and organized themselves into a Presbytery: Elder John Lee Smith, Elder Graydon Smith, Elder David Turner and Elder Lloyd Wall; Deacons Fred Murphy, Frank Pilgreen, John Smith, Cisco Barron, Barney Sullivan, Clifford Wilbanks, and Richard Head.

The Presbytery organized itself by electing Elder David Turner Moderator, and Bro. Cisco Barron as Clerk. Brother Fred Murphy was appointed as spokesman for the church, who then presented Brother Doyle Murphy to the Presbytery.

After due examination of said Brother as to deportment, qualifications, and the state of God's gift to them as a Deacon to the satisfaction of the Presbytery, the Presbytery proceeded to ordain him to the office of Deacon by selecting Elder Graydon Smith to word the prayer and Elder Lloyd Wall to deliver the charge.

Whereupon the Presbytery then proceeded with the ordination by the laying on of hands of the Presbytery and with prayer by Elder Graydon Smith and then by charge delivered by Elder Lloyd Wall.

We the members of the Presbytery commend Deacon Doyle Murphy to all orderly orthodox Primitive Baptists of our same Faith and Order as being sound in doctrine, careful in deportment, and humble in the display of God's gift of the office of Deacon.

The right hand of fellowship was given him by the members of the Presbytery,

Rehobeth Church, and Brethren of Sister Churches, and delivered back to the Church as a duly ordained Deacon by the Presbytery and received by the church.

Minutes of the proceedings were read and approved and the Presbytery was adjourned in order with prayer by Brother Frank Pilgreen.

Elder David E. Turner, Moderator
C. C. Barron, Clerk

Dear Elder Spangler;

I enjoyed the trip that we took together with Sister Spangler and my Wife, and in your daughter's home, in Sarasota Florida.

I have been thinking about different scriptures, which I will try to give, or write, I hope that the Lord will direct me to write for the benefit of our people.

"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Matt. 10:36.

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." II Timothy 3:12.

All scriptures must be fulfilled. Our persecution comes from the foes that are right among us, members of our own order. Since the Bill of Rights other denominations are not allowed to interfere with our way of worship. Let us all examine our own selves whether we be in the faith. I have never heard of you causing trouble among our people, and I don't think that I ever will; and if I have I do not know anything about it.

May God bless our people to look upon the things of others, not the things of our own.

Elder Spangler I believe if a man is inspired to write a letter as directed by the Spirit, it would be as sound as any of the letters that Paul, or any of the other apostles ever wrote in their day.

Elder Spangler I have no ill will against any one. I hope that we will see true repentance among all of our people. May God lead us in the way of Jesus Christ.

I am not asking for this to be published, neither do object, do as you think best.

Yours in sweet fellowship
(Elder) J. R. Hollandsworth

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The next session of the Staunton River Primitive Baptist Union will be held, the Lord willing, with Mt. Ararat Church (better known as Old Mountain Church), the 5th Sunday and Saturday before in August, 1981. Everyone is cordially invited to come and be with us.

Elder H. W. Wray, Moderator
Sarah H. Barker, Clerk

DIFFICULTY AND SWEETNESS OF GOD'S WILL

Never scarce in all my life did I, under God the Spirit, labour under a doctrine of Scripture more than the one just below. If you observe, therein is included all that is or ever was known of experienced Christianity since the creation of the world. Therein you will observe lukewarmness, and rebellion, and all manner of things, good and bad, equally cut at or supported. The text is this: "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God: (Col. 4:12)

From this text I gather what has stunned me many a time, namely, that God has a will. And that Will also embraces the minutest circumstance of our lives, both of bitters and sweets, joys and sorrows. If five sparrows are sold for two farthings, and, as we are assured, are not forgotten by the Heavenly Father; if the very hairs of our head are all numbered; if every idle word and every secret thought is taken into account; I gather from this that the Infinite God is no careless Looker-on,

observing and regulating the affairs of the sons of men.

The stature is fixed; the number of our days is appointed, also the boundaries of our habitations,—our days of sorrow and joy, our sinkings and risings, our pleasures and pains. And are all these, even to the least, the smallest circumstances, appointed executively or permissively of God, even to the most exact and nice degree? Is it all weighed out unalterably by Him by whom "actions (not notions) are weighed?" O tremendous "deep!"

I have been long convinced of the folly of striving against God. I believe I pass a good part of my time in communion with God, the Appointer of all things executively or permissively? And how do I pass that time in communion? In dictating? No. I know God has a will, as Epaphras says. My employment in the communion with God is, to find out by the Holy Spirit's goings experimentally in my mind, what that will is? Thus, Enoch, Abraham, and Noah "walked" with God. People walking always together are likely to know a good deal of one another. How certain I am that I shall have all the trouble I am to have! How this makes me cleave with purpose of heart to God! "I have stuck unto thy testimonies". Epaphras labours fervently for all the will of God to be done in us. O the terrible deep!

I have known the time when I have been brim-ful of trouble, my heart almost fit to break. And yet I durst not lift up my little finger to alter anything without God. And I have found that God can alter things better than I can. How he can speak to men (and to me too) out of the whirlwind, or melt them sweetly in the sunshine, to mould them to his secret will!

O how my soul trembles with adoration before Him! Now those who tremble at his threatenings, and those who tremble with delight at his consolations; those who tremble at their own ignorance and a sense of God's

superior wisdom, at their own infinitely less than littleness, (for we are five hundred or ten thousand talents terribly in debt!) and at God's unsearchable greatness; those tremblers thus, these are the men, that living so near God get acquainted by secret revelation (in accordance with Scripture) as to what God's will is.

Epaphras laboured fervently to this end in his prayers. As Hart says, "Accomplish in me all thy will".

But it may be objected, if none besides we are elected, bought with a price, and redeemed thus in particular redemption, that it is a needs-be we must fall into all the sin we are redeemed from. *But does that encourage me in sin? Just the reverse.* I know I shall have the rod for my sin. I know it killed the Beloved Redeemer. Thus love and fear make me watch, fight, groan, wrestle, and struggle unto blood against sin, and die, in Christ, to it, in evangelical crucifixion and mortification thereto; insomuch so, that Arminians who trust less or more to their own righteousness, and bitterly reject Christ's righteousness imputed by gift as the only possible foundation and salvation; these Arminians, I have long perceived, with their wretched self-righteousness, have not a fiftieth part of the tenderness of conscience that I feel.

Epaphras's fervent labouring certainly embraces both the sorrows and joys we are predestinated to go through, before we launch out of time into the next world.

Epaphras's fervent labouring in his prayers embraces all things that the elect have to go through, and must go through, in the time-state of this present world. And who is sufficient for these things? Excruciating bitters and insupportable sweets; "Stay me with flagons; comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love", and "rivers of tears running down one's eyes" spiritually, because of insupportable troubles: every-day trouble less or more: all is included: as is also every-day comfort

more or less; which quickened souls must go through, in their being God's "workmanship". All, all the wondrous catalogue is included in the wondrous grasp of Epaphras's ample prayer!

And who, I ask again, is sufficient for these things? God "will spue" (vulgar word for our refined hypocrisy!) lukewarm Christians out of his mouth. (Rev. 3:16) He will fill backsliders with their own ways. He will keep rebels in a dry land. He will let foolish virgins and wise ones slumber together in professedly experimental churches, for some deep purpose. He will maul the head of pride. He will work contrition, poorness, and trembling, into the souls of his people.

And herein let me make a remark or two. Contrition, poverty, and trembling, which spiritually our first Adam's nature huffs at, are in the sight of God of great price. God will "look" at them. When, alas! the brightest mere knowledge shall pass away as of not the slightest account with God, like the idle noise of a jingling bell or a sounding cymbal.

O the glories, beauties, and grace of ripening to stand complete and perfect in all (the whole of) the will of God! O the labour, continuing, and fervency to this wonderful end! The text says, Epaphras was "always" at it, at this prayer. "Thy will be done", is the A and Z of the alphabet. All his modes, etc., in "prayers", he was thus enabled to drive to this end. And O the immortal sweetness of success and triumph herein, in which severity and comeliness shine! He himself was winning the prize, and travailing for it for others of the elect.

Now, any one "saluting" saints with this doctrine is not well received by many. Here were no perverse loopholes for rebellion, carnality, wordliness, free-will, self-righteousness, or antinomianism. Here, like racers running a race, as Paul says, we are reminded that many run in a race who

are never to win. Here a saint is cautioned to cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to God's word. Here the noble Epaphras cautions any one to see whether any part at all of God's word is against him. "All the will of God". Crucifixion, and making dead, or mortifying, to the world and the flesh, as well as salvation by grace without works, ("the body is of Christ"), and keeping ourselves from idols, and being crucified to the flesh and the world, thus in a victory and triumph over inordinate affections, etc.; these and such like are the glorious effects. Glorious! For destitute of oil, the foolish virgins, (sound in every thing but the secret life of God in Christ within,) I say these foolish virgins have neither the body actual nor the effects, and it is to be feared they are among us in rightly constituted experimental churches. What is to become of the brains of the notional Calvinist? the false fire of the Arminian? in all their shades, splits, divisions, and denominations? But I must leave them as ripening for the knife of final slaughter, and drop a few words more to those who are planted and ripening as really elect in God's garden.

You may see by Epaphras's prayer that God intends to realize in you the drift of what is written in Scripture. Now I ask you plainly, can you see your character as in a looking-glass in Scripture, as there written of the saints, by the hand of God himself? I shall conclude with this, that "God is not mocked". And, ask your conscience, reader. And the beginning, middle, and end of religion shall be gradually and finally fulfilled in the elect of God, as Epaphras prayed for, and as Scripture sets forth; while all prating fools, as Solomon calls them, and notional, and stony-ground, and thorny-ground hearers, as the Lord calls them; yes, those even who are thus possessed of, even as Dr. Goodwin justly calls it, the shallow enlightenings of the Holy

Ghost, (short of the exceeding greatness of his power, which latter is confined to the elect alone;) all those, I say, mentioned in Hebrews 6:5,6; 10:26, are not included at all in Epaphras's prayer as above; for it would have been better for those not to have known the way of Christ in the shallow enlightenings of the Spirit, who have lamps burning with outward apparent consistency, and who never get at all in wars, changes, and victories, to the marrow hinted at in Epaphras's prayer.

Abingdon

I.K.

The Gospel Standard February, 1847

**PIGG RIVER
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
1981**

The 156th session of the Pigg River Association will convene with the church at Chapel the first Sunday in August, Friday and Saturday before. The dates are July 31, Aug. 1, and Aug. 2, 1981.

Chapel Church is located in Franklin County Virginia. Those coming by and from Martinsville go Route 108 to Route 890 (these merge at Figsboro). Go approximately 22 miles from Martinsville. Church will be on the right side. If coming from North or East, go Route 40 to Route 890 at Penhook. Go about 10 miles. Watch for signs.

Jamie E. Cooper
Association Clerk

**SMITH RIVER PRIMITIVE BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION**

The Lord willing the Smith River Association will be held at Salem Church, in Floyd Co. Va., on route 221, Sept. 4, 5, and 6, with Mountain View Church acting as the host church.

We invite all our brothers and sisters that are in peace and good standing at home to come and be with us.

Elder Roy Agee
Rt. 1, Copper Hill, Va. 24079

DELAWARE ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the Delaware Old School Baptist Association will meet with Rock Springs Church, Lancaster Co. Pa. the 5th Sunday of August 1981. Singing will begin at 10:30 a.m.

Rock Springs Church is located just North of the Maryland, Pa. line on highway 222, left side of road.

Lovers of the truth are invited.

SOUTH OUACHITA

PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The next session of the South Ouachita Primitive Baptist Association will convene with Rehobeth Church, located at El Dorado, Arkansas, five miles north on Highway 7 and 1/2 mile west of Williams' Store, beginning on Friday before the fourth Sunday in September, 1981. We cordially invite everyone who loves the truth as it is in Jesus Christ to visit with us.

C. C. Wilbanks

FIVE MILE CREEK ASSOCIATION

The one hundred fourteenth annual session of the Five Mile Creek Old School Primitive Baptist Association will be held with New Hope Church on Friday and Saturday before, and the third Sunday in September, 1981 (Sept. 18, 19, 20).

New Hope Church is located about eleven miles northeast of Jasper, Alabama, to the right off Highway 69 on Sipsey Road.

All lovers of truth are welcome.

Elder H.C. Moon, Moderator
Route 1, Box 167A
Breman, Alabama
Phone (205) 287-1603

SEVEN MILE ASSOCIATION

The next session of the Seven Mile Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing, with the church at Reedy Prong meeting house in Johnston County, N.C. Services are to begin Friday, September 18th at 11:00 A.M., Saturday the 19th at 9:30 P.M., and Sunday the 20th at 10:30 A.M.

The meeting house is located twelve miles southeast of Benson, N.C. on State Road

#1124, between 50 and 55 highways. We invite the Elders, brethren, sisters, and friends to meet with us.

Elder W. D. Godwin, Moderator
Brother James G. Young, Clerk

ORIGINAL SOUTH ARKANSAS
ASSOCIATION MEETING

The next session of the Original Pilgrim Rest Church on Friday before the third Sunday in September, 1981 (Sept. 18, 18, 20). Pilgrim Rest Church is located off Highway 167 five miles north of Fordyce, Arkansas. Take Highway 273 about 1/2 mile to the church.

We dropped the business part of the Association and hold three days meeting at this same time each year.

Elder J. C. Townley
Route 2, Box 245
Fordyce, Arkansas 71742

THE PASSOVER FEAST, AND THE
PROPER GUESTS

JOHN 6:54

"Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

At this speech the Jews take very great offence; yea, numbers of the Lord's nominal disciples kick at it, depart from him, and walk no more with him; nor doth it seem that the Lord's true disciples were altogether pleased, but rather disgusted; hence the Lord's inquiry, "Will ye also go away?" The words that the Lord spoke were spirit, and they were life; but the carnal Jews put carnal constructions upon all that he said, and took it for granted that all who thus fed upon Christ must be cannibals.

Bringing divine mysteries down to carnal reason, which can never reach their divine sublimity, is the sole cause of making Christ Jesus a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; for by carnal reason they cannot comprehend them, therefore they take offence at, and

reject them, and so stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed. The poor woman of Samaria put her constructions upon Christ's living water as these do upon his flesh and blood; for she could not raise one thought above Jacob's well, nor can these raise one thought above eating real flesh, and drinking real blood.

That depth of Satan, called transubstantiation, took its rise from such scriptures as these, by which foolish notion the Saviour, who is the eternal banquet of poor perishing souls, is turned into a morsel for the bowels, which, with all other meats that perish, is cast out into the draught.

But one might think it strange that the Jews, who had been so long under the ceremonial law, and so long accustomed to offer sacrifices, should see no further than the victim and the altar, when their law was so full of accounts about sin offerings, peace offerings, burnt offerings, and atonements; and, above all, the passover offerings, by which, and under the blood of which, Israel escaped the judgments of God in Egypt.

Moreover, under the law some of their sacrifices were variously distributed: one part was for God, which pointed out satisfaction for sins; another part went to the priests, another to the offerer, and another to those who were invited; and thus it is now, Christ our priest delighted in the redemption of our souls; his meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work. The royal priesthood, as Peter calls us, and all who are invited and effectually called to the heavenly feast, find nourishment and satisfaction in Christ for their souls.

Why should mystical food seem such a strange thing, when there is scarce a person living who doth not feed mystically upon something? The covetous are said to swallow down riches, and to vomit them up again. God

shall cast them out of his belly, Job 20:15, as Judas did when he cast the thirty pieces of silver down in the temple, that is, when the wrath of God had made him sick. The whore of Babylon is said to thirst for the blood of the saints, and to be made drunk with it. The destruction of God's people is a sweet entertainment to their revengeful souls. "The mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness". The prodigal would fain have filled his belly with husks, that is, with a form of godliness without the power. The heretic feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, so that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? (Isa. 44:20) Of Ephraim it is said, when he went to idolatry, that he feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind, (Hosea 12:1). Those that hate knowledge, and despise reproof, eat the fruit of their own ways, and are filled with their own devices. (Prov. 1:31) And the souls of transgressors eat violence. Now all these feed in a mystical way, and all of this is said to be spending money for that which is not bread, and labour for that which satisfieth not; which food is only to gratify the carnal mind, or the evil desires of the flesh, for it can never satisfy the desires of a soul conscious of guilt and sensible of his lost estate. Nothing but heavenly food will do for such a distressed sinner, who is searching the scriptures earnestly, in which he hopes to find eternal life; and they are they, saith the Saviour, that testify of me. He finds himself, like the Ethiopian eunuch, too ignorant to come to their spiritual sense, except someone guides him. Now, as there are some who perish for lack of knowledge, it follows that knowledge must be food for those who perish not. "My son, eat thou honey, because it is good, and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul when thou hast found it; then there shall be a reward, and thine expectation shall not be cut off."

Ezekiel eats the roll, and John the little book; and, when they came to learn, mark, and inwardly digest, the things that were contained in them, they found them as sweet as honey. A knowledge of Christ crucified is heavenly food: and God hath promised to send pastors after his own heart, that shall feed his people with knowledge and understanding.

Again, the self-condemned soul, who knows that he hath broken every precept of God's law, and stands condemned by it, being under a sense of God's wrath, he hungers for righteousness, and Christ crucified is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes; and it is in this, and this only, that he can find peace in his conscience, or acceptance with God.

One who labours under the intolerable weight of sin, and hath nothing before his eyes but his own transgressions, with nothing but bitter reflections within, and expecting nothing but torment in the world to come; it is no wonder that such a soul, hearing that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, and that the dear Redeemer made peace and reconciliation by the blood of his cross, I say it is no wonder that such a poor soul thirsts for the atonement. "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." And so it is to those who feel their real need of them; for such a soul by the eye of faith sees Christ under all the sins of his people, bearing the weight of them in his own body on the tree; enduring the wrath of God and the curse of the law, which are due to such transgressors; and as their surety paying the dreadful debt, and delivering them from going down to the pit by laying down his own life, the price of their ransom.

"The words that I speak unto you are spirit, and they are life." They are not to be carnally or literally understood. I lay down my life a ransom for many, and I shall take it again, and ascend into heaven in that human nature, which I

shall offer up a sacrifice for sin, and the heavens will receive me till the restitution of all things, and yet, as the omnipresent God, I am with you always to the end of the world; and, though the world sees me no more, yet ye see me, and I will manifest myself to them that the Father hath given me, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him, and I will come with all the benefits of my cross, and will sup with him, and he with me; and such shall know that my word is spirit, and my word is life, for I shall bring my reward with me. I will remove the veil of ignorance, and feed him with the knowledge of myself, and his interest in me; his guilty conscience shall be satisfied with a joyful sense of the remission of all sins; his dead soul shall have the abundance of life; his hard heart shall melt under my dying love to him; and he shall abound in hope toward me. I will satisfy his self-condemned soul with my everlasting righteousness; I will renew his mind and make it heavenly, and keep it in perfect peace stayed upon me, and I will fill him with love, joy, and consolation: he shall see me as his all sufficient Saviour, and shall trust in me as the faithful and true witness; and shall know his election, redemption, and reconciliation; justification, sanctification, and renovation; and have an assurance of his eternal glorification. I will live in him, and he shall live by the faith of me; for I will come to him, and will dwell in him, and he shall be replenished, filled, and infinitely satisfied with my fulness, and with my goodness; and shall see that all those things are procured to him by my sacrifice, and assured to him by the satisfaction I have made, and by the manifestation of myself to him; then shall he know that my flesh is meat indeed, when he sees me to be a sin-offering, and that I was made a curse to save him from eternal death. And he shall know that my blood is drink indeed, when it purges him from all his

sins, redeems him from the wrath to come, and opens a way for him to eternal bliss; to such an one my word is spirit in the application of it to him, and by the experience, power, and accomplishment, of it in him; and my word is life where I thus quicken a soul, and save it from legal, spiritual, and eternal death. And I will raise him up at the last day.

William Huntington

Strong, Ark. 71765

Dear Editors of the Signs:

Enclosed you will find a \$5.00 check made out to the *Signs* by my son, Alvin Fox, for renewal of my subscription. I hope it reaches you in time for the March issue. I do not want to miss one copy. I like to read the truth as it is in Jesus - published, as well as to hear it preached. It is my meat and drink, when blessed of the Lord to rejoice in the only true and living God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three are one. This God is everywhere present, and nowhere absent. He rules the armies of heaven, and works His will amongst the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, or say what doest thou. Hymn 356 is on my mind to write:

"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Or to defend His cause;
Maintain the honor of His word,
The glory of His cross.

Jesus, my God, I know His name;
His name is all my trust.
Nor will He put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost.

Firm as His throne, His promise stands
And He can well secure
What I've committed to His hands
Till the decisive hour.

Then will He own my worthless name
Before His Father's face.
And in the new Jerusalem
Appoint my soul a place."

I desire to write a little concerning the Lord's dealings with me, if not deceived. For many years I felt to be a lost condemned sinner before God, and felt

hell would be my doom. One night after retiring, I was calling on the Lord to save me. Around midnight, I was awakened out of a deep sleep with these words in a still small voice, "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sins". I rejoiced in the Lord into the late morning. I've had my doubts and fears from time to time of being one of the Lord's little ones. I've also had seasons of rejoicing with words of comfort, or hearing preaching.

I first heard a few Primitive Baptist Elders preach over the radio. I enjoyed hearing them. Then we moved from Rison, Ark. to Strong, Ark., where we were blessed of the Lord to attend Good Hope Church near Strong. We heard able ministers preach there, as well as other churches of the Primitive Baptist faith. I enjoyed hearing all of them. I desired to follow my Lord in baptism, and the watery grave a long time before I did. I hope it was of the Lord. I went before Good Hope Church in 1964 in July, was received by the church, and baptized by Elder Hudson in August of the same year.

When I was baptized I know it was not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.

Before becoming a member of the church I had a few dreams that was of comfort to me. I will write about one. I dreamed I was walking behind the Lord, in His footsteps. I thought the graves were opening up of the dead. I was made to hope that I was one of the dead that had part in the first resurrection. Even after being quickened, I went through a long period feeling to be under the law and its curse, until Christ was formed in me, "Christ in you, the Hope of glory", and made me to know He was the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone that believeth. These words also came to me, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world". "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of

God, not of works lest any man should boast. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”.

This is only a few evidences for a reason of a sweet hope in Jesus. I am sometimes made to believe He is my Friend, Husband, Prophet, Priest, King, my all in all. I still feel to be sinful, and wretched, much of the time, full of short comings, and come short of the glory of God.

I'll bring this to a close. With love to all the household of faith.

Mrs. Lula B. Fox

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”. (I Cor. 1:1,2)

If I am not mistaken, I believe this. My reason for believing this is because that He supplies everything that a poor sinner has or will ever need. But that, within itself, is not enough to preach. I now see the perking up of eyes; I behold the shrug of shoulders.

I have been told repeatedly that I do not have any need to ever mention the devil's name. Let us see. Thousands of years ago there was a servant of God by the name of Job. Ever so often I am reminded that God does not have anything to do with the devil or with wickedness. Is that right? I do hope that I desire to be right. This much I am sure about. The devil had not bothered Job. If God does not in some way beyond my comprehension, carry the history of His people to the devil, then why did God call the attention of the devil to Job? If, as I have heard, God had rather Job not ever been tried as he was tried, why did God endanger poor old Job in this way? From a human standpoint, if God had rather Job not be tried, He acted in such a way that His “rather” was thwarted

indeed.

But your uneasiness is out of place. I am not going to place the devil on a parallel with God. He was the Creator when He called the attention of Job to the devil. He was the Potter all of the time and even though God did call attention to the devil of His servant Job, yet Job did not recognize the devil in any of his trials. He knew who was trying him. He knew that with David, “all his times were in God's hands”, and ultimately and finally, and to the praise an honor and glory of His majesty, it was He that was praised in it all, and the works of the devil spoiled.

Everything is in the hands of Jehovah-God. And yet I am not the least bit afraid to declare to you that the devil met the Saviour in the wilderness; What love is this; what a glorious doctrine is this. He went willingly for the sake of His people. We all have succumbed to temptation, but He did not. Satan thought that the Saviour could be enticed, but He stood.

Every craftsman counts up the cost before the building or the work is started. The cost of saving God's children has not been left to a lack of discernment in the cost. Every step and every work for the perfecting and bringing home to glory was summed up in the eternal mind of God in eternity and in manifestation perfected by Jesus Christ, and successfully and efficiently the Holy Spirit is now engaged in perfecting that which concerns each heir of promise.

Bless His dear name, He is the Amen of the New Covenant. All of the New Covenant promises are in him yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God.

As Job and David and Paul, and I humbly hope this sinner, are bound to give thanks unto God who broke our being bound unto Satan and that we, together with all those perfected in Him, are now free, which they could not have been by the strength of the law.

Elder W. D. Griffin

BOOK NOTICE

It gives me great pleasure to announce the re-printing of the book **"TRIED IN THE FURNACE"** by Elder E. J. Lambert, my Dad.

The book was re-printed from an original book. The hard cover is red with gold lettering. The author's obituary has been added in the back of the book.

The price of each book is \$5.00, postage and handling \$1.10. Arkansas residents add .15 for sales tax.

BOOKS MAY BE ORDERED FROM:

Charles T. Lambert

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(The Editors of the *Signs* are glad to recommend this book)

EDITORIAL

SERMON BY
ELDER D. V. SPANGLER
PREACHED AT
STAUNTON RIVER UNION
NOVEMBER 30, 1980

I've been favored to attend this meeting both days, yesterday and today. Part of the enjoyment of the meeting is to hear our own ministers speak, as well as the visitors. Now would you sing the first and the last verse of Hymn 129:

"How sweet, how heavenly is the sight,
When those who love the Lord
In one another's peace delight,
And thus fulfill his word;
Love is the golden chain that binds
The happy souls above;
And he's an heir of heaven that finds
His bosom glow with love."

If I remember correctly it was 56 years ago this year that I first visited this place, at the Association of 1924. Brother Payne tells me it was then. I remember visiting a home just out of town, and trying to speak to a woman dying with tuberculosis. There probably weren't over half a dozen of us there that evening. I spent the night with Brother Pickrel's father that night. Those are

some things I remember of that meeting.

I would like to offer some comments from the 11th chapter of the Book of Hebrews, the Lord willing. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

As we think on this wonderful chapter our mind is moved on to the next chapter, where the apostle Paul refers to the saints being compassed about with so great cloud of witnesses. Now this cloud of witnesses is numbered and identified in the 11th chapter. Paul said, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,....." (Heb. 12:1). Faith is referred to by Paul as substance; the substance of things hoped for. What do we mean by faith being the substance of things hoped for? What is that substance? It's easier to ask questions than it is to answer them, I have found. But it is the embodiment of God's truth revealed in the heart that embraces all of God's truth in substance. That's faith. It's not spirit, an intangible spirit, it's substance. And it's a substance of things hoped for in the heart of a person. I don't believe people who know this truth will have to die to know about heaven.

The modern doctrine of men is, and it's the dividing line between all truth and error, that we are saved by faith through grace. That sounds simple, doesn't it? But it doesn't ring true. They put faith in front of grace and all false doctrines do that now, just the same as they did centuries ago. But the Bible says, "By grace are you saved through faith". We must never put faith ahead of grace. It would be impossible, wouldn't it? It's a substance, and it's a substance without which a person never will please God. For without faith it is impossible to please God. What is the substance? It is the substance of things hoped for.

I heard a man speak in Alabama this

fall, I can't remember **exactly** what he said, but I know it left a nice, good feeling in me: That heaven would be just exactly what we had longed for and he couldn't describe what it would be.

"For by it the elders obtained a good report". Are these elders of the Jewish synagogue? No! These elders are the prophets and those ancient ones of old who left upon record the testimony of Christ, because the spirit of Christ is the spirit of prophecy. No one ever prophesied who didn't have the Spirit of Christ, of things that were to come to pass. It's a testimony of Christ. By it the elders obtained a good report.

"Through faith (now this was by faith), we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God". Who is it who knows in this world today, how the world was made? No one except one who has the faith that God has given. The world, by wisdom, knew not God. "The natural man receives not the things of the spirit, neither indeed can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned". All the scientists, all the theologians, all the astronomers, all of those who suppose they know how the world was made, and they are trying to tell us about it; they don't know unless they also have the faith Paul speaks about in this chapter. For Paul said, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God". Nothing short of that. And I had rather believe a man who hardly **knows** his right hand from his left hand in **whom** God had planted a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ than to believe the man who knows it all, hadn't you? They tell us how the world was framed, and how man came from a monkey--that's man's doctrine. But they haven't told us where **the** monkey came from.

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God". Yes, it's something **within** the soul and heart of a poor child of God that knows God made this world and hung it upon nothing. There's something deep

in those that have an understanding of our immutable and eternal God that causes them not to question the power that made this world. I don't question it, and I thank God I don't. Do you thank God you don't?

Paul said, "we understand", you can't tell it, you can't explain, but you understand it! The worlds were framed by the word of God. How many worlds? All worlds? The scientists, the astronomers are still finding planets floating around in outer space as they call it. Who made those planets? God Almighty! Who controls those planets? God Almighty! The same power that made all things still controls all things; even from the falling of a sparrow to the dissolution of a world. This blessed truth causes something to well up in the heart that knows the God I'm talking about, to praise and honor and glorify Him, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. Paul says, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things that **are not seen**", that which the carnal **mind** of men can't see. For the things that are visible, in creation, we see them, but the things of faith are things that are invisible. There's an invisible God that is revealed in the heart of sinners. The man next door to that sinner who has such a revelation wouldn't know what was going on if God didn't show him, too.

I remember years ago I was walking up a street in New York City. I was meditating about the things I believe. I thought, "You reckon the Lord knows I'm in New York? You suppose He knows everybody I see going down this street?" The Lord said the sparrow doesn't fall without Him. The very hairs of our head are all numbered. And I said, "Yes, Lord, you know every one that goes down the street".

He hung the world on nothing. He made it out of nothing. And the Bible says so. He didn't need anything to hang the world on. What's it upheld by?

It's upheld by His own power. When it's time to bring it to an end, He'll do so and men won't hasten it nor hinder it one moment.

I'm glad - thankful - I believe this doctrine. I've believed it for nearly sixty years - I think its fifty-six years. I still believe in the doctrine I started out with nearly fifty-six years ago and that's what I try to preach among you brethren. And I'll leave here today believing it. We understand the worlds were framed by the word of God.

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain". What made the difference? I'll tell you what made the difference. God Almighty giving him faith in Himself (in God) made the difference. He wouldn't have known to bring a lamb to God if God hadn't given him faith to see the true Lamb of God. I said some time ago that it wasn't by chance the lamb had the humility it had. It wasn't just an instinct to come, like an animal's instinct, for God Almighty gave the lamb as a type of His son.

I believe that even the dumb brute, (and probably you won't agree with me and if you don't that's all right) acknowledges God more than man does when left to himself. He (the dumb brute) has an instinct, I don't know what it is, but God gave it to him. And sometimes I wonder, I wonder, I wonder about it. But the poet said:

"All nature owns his guardian care
In Him we live and move;
But nobler benefits declare
The wonders of His love.

Nobler benefits!

Abel brings a lamb. Who told him what to bring? The Almighty God gave him faith to see the lamb and that's why he brought it, as typical of the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. A more excellent sacrifice! Cain made a sacrifice too, but all he had to bring was what he produced with his own hands, and that's all that false religion brings today - that which they

produce themselves. God had respect to Abel and He had no respect for Cain or his offering. The dividing line between false religion and true religion is right here. And it still continues that way and will be until God Almighty ends this world.

"....by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." Witness from whom? From God Almighty, that's who. "God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh". What do you mean by Abel being dead, and yet speaking? How could he speak when he's dead? That first cry that ever went from earth to heaven was the cry of blood; and whose blood was it? It was Abel's. Yes, he had a voice: that blood that ran down on the ground cried to heaven. And it was the first cry that went from man to God; the blood of that innocent person. It was the voice of him being dead and yet speaketh. Where did it run to, that blood of Abel? It ran down on the ground. And we are the ground, aren't we? And it cried to heaven. There are two words that are interchangeable: one is the word "blood" and the other is the word "life". Where do you find the word "blood" you can say "life" and the life of everything is in its blood.

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." He took that man right out of the world and carried him to heaven. I believe when the Lord comes again that those of His people still living, He will take out of the world into heaven. Don't you all believe that? Paul said, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which

are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Won't that be a wonderful thing? The Lord just takes us up to heaven. He is going to do some that way. It may be me! It may be you! But it is going to happen. But why? Because God Almighty said it would. And we don't need anything else.

"For without faith it is impossible to please God." What does it say? "Without faith it is impossible to please God". All so called preaching, all the revivals in the world, all the scheming of men has never substituted for faith. Somebody says, "How do you get faith?" It is the gift of God. And the next verse--(I don't want to preach too long. These brethren are nice to me, unworthy as I am, and I love them. I love you brethren for Christ's sake--) the next verse says, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is". He is what? That He is God, that's what I'm talking about. There is no such thing as coming to God apart from Christ. Our Saviour said, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

(And here the tape ended. Elder Spangler spoke for a very few minutes longer and I regret I did not get it all but the words he spoke were so beautiful I wanted others to see them on paper.)

Transcribed by Sister Reidy Pickral

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OBITUARIES

DELLA JESSUP WILLARD

In sadness I attempt to comply with the request that I write in memory of our dear Sister, Della Jessup Willard. She was born July 26, 1892, and passed from this life January 9, 1981, at the age of 88 years. She leaves to mourn her passing her husband, Brother Hobart Willard; five daughters, Mrs. Ollie W. Sharp, Mrs. Belva W. Davis, Mrs. Elsie W. Banks, Mrs. Pauline Hamrick, Mrs. Trudy Cloud; one son, Mr. Lenford Willard; 14 grandchildren and 23 great grandchildren. Sister Willard united with the church on April 29, 1916, and was baptized June 11, 1916, by Elder Jim Dickerson. She attended her church as long as her health permitted.

Her funeral was conducted in Hillsville Funeral Home by Elder Hale Terry, and she was laid to rest in the family cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the second coming of our Lord and Saviour.

Sister Willard is greatly missed by her family, brethren, and friends, but may the

family and we at Bell Spur Church be reconciled to our loss and to God's will. Bell Spur Church, while in conference February 14, 1981, requested the above be written and a copy be sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication, a copy recorded on our church book, and a copy to the family.

Ilene H. Clifton, Clerk

MURL JONES

Murl Jones, of Nashville, Ark., died December 22, 1979, age 85 years 10 months, and 22 days, in a Hope Hospital. He was not a member of any earthly church, but was a strong believer in the predestination of all things. He attended church as long as he was able and went to all the Associations when possible.

He leaves his wife, 3 sons and 3 daughters and a number of grandchildren and 6 sisters.

I feel he is one of the Lord's chosen and is at rest until the resurrection when he will be with his Lord and Saviour. He loved the old Baptist Church.

Written in hope that I will be among those.
Pray for me if you have a mind.

Mrs. Murl Jones

MYRTHA ALTIZER GORDON

Myrtha Altizer Gordon died in the Meadowbrook Nursing Home in Shawsville, Virginia on January 3, 1981. She was 91 years, 7 months, 14 days old.

She was the youngest of six children born to William H. and Angeline Graham Altizer. She was born on May 19, 1889, at their home near Riner in Montgomery County, Virginia.

She was married to Walter Fount Gordon of Christiansburg, Virginia on June 1, 1922. Her husband died January 26, 1958. After his death she lived alone in Riner.

Mrs. Gordon united with the Valley View Primitive Baptist Church in July, 1930, and was baptized by Elder Lonnie Cummings.

Although she was badly crippled with arthritis, she attended church when she was able. She enjoyed the church service and the fellowship of the church meant a great deal to her.

Funeral services were held at the Richardson-Horne Funeral Home Chapel on January 5, 1981. They were conducted by her

pastor, Elder Raymond Goad. Her body was laid to rest in Sunset Cemetery in Christiansburg. She is survived by five nieces and four nephews.

We remember her love of God and the Church, her kindness to relatives, friends, and neighbors, and how uncomplaining she was, even though she suffered greatly with arthritis. She is sadly missed.

Written at the request of the Valley View Primitive Baptist Church by her niece.

Reba Grim Rasnic

SISTER EVA ROBERSON LEGGETT

A devout Christian and a believer in the doctrine and faith that was once delivered to the saints, has passed from our midst. She died after a short illness in Martin General Hospital on January 11, 1981, at the age of 86 years. She was born in Pitt County of Orlando and Melissa Moore Roberson, on March 2, 1895.

She was married to W. S. (Jack) Leggett in 1925, who preceded her in death several years. She is survived by one son, W. S. (Jack) Leggett, Jr., and four step-daughters; Mrs. Betty Howard, Mrs. Ruby Smithwick, Mrs. Hattie Taylor, and Miss Eula Mae Leggett. She also leaves to mourn her passing several grandchildren, step grandchildren, step great grandchildren, and one sister, Mrs. Hattie White.

A member of Spring Green Primitive Baptist Church for many years, she was a devoted member, always present at meeting time, ever expressing her love for the brethren. She was loved by those that knew her, especially the members of her church, and the sister churches.

Her funeral was conducted at Bigg's Funeral Home in Williamston, N.C., on January 13, 1981, by Elders Joseph A. Leggett and Marvin E. Garner, also assisting was J. N. Baggett.

She was laid to rest in the church yard cemetery at Spring Green Church, to await the resurrection when the Son of God the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, shall return and take with Himself the jewels of His mercy to that place prepared for them that love Him.

Done by order of conference Saturday before the fourth Sunday in January, 1981.

Elder Joseph A. Leggett, Moderator
Mary J. Jenkins, Clerk

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 9/81
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

THE EARLY RELIGIOUS LIFE OF
ELDER DAVID BARTLEY
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

(Continued from last month.)

CHAPTER III.

LOST

As I grew older and mind was more matured, I became deeply exercised about the way of salvation, or how a man can be just with God. For I could see no possible way for the salvation of a guilty sinner, without dishonoring the law and justice of God--and this could not be, I knew. My mind most seriously dwelt upon this about three years, I think. Finally, as I could not understand how it was possible for me to be saved, I wrote a long letter to Elder Wilson Thompson, telling him my troubles (and I think this was the first time I ever told any one of my woeful condition). I told him that I well understood how God, my Creator, Lawgiver, and Judge, was just in my everlasting condemnation, for I was sinful, wicked and guilty in His sight, and also in my own eyes, but how the same God, sitting in judgement upon my case and trying me by His holy law, which I had violated, could pardon and save me and yet remain just, was impossible for me to understand. Therefore, I asked him to tell me how this could be; for I had the greatest confidence in him. That God is holy, just and good, I believed, and His law was holy, therefore, I could not ask nor hope to be saved at the injury of justice.

Dear Elder Thompson sent me a long letter in answer, tenderly and ably setting forth the glorious mystery of

man's redemption from the law of God and salvation from sin through the Man Jesus Christ, our Mediator. Years later I had this very instructive and comforting letter published in the Signs of the Times, for the benefit of others; but when I received and read it, over and over, the mystery was as dark to me as before; for I could not understand his letter, nor receive the least relief nor comfort from it. How was it possible for the life and death of the sinless Jesus to apply to me, or make me anything else than the vile sinner I was?

It was now more than ever apparent that mine was an outside and hopeless case, and my soul was filled with an awful sense of separation from the presence of God, and for me there was no forgiveness. How could He forgive me without injustice to Himself and dishonor to His law? The holy God would not do this great wrong, neither could I ask it.

Even then I believed the Lord had a people, whom He would save, though I could not tell how; but I was not one of them, and for me there was no salvation, but I should die in my sins and be forever lost. Alas! I was already lost. I felt it and knew it. God would have forgiven my sins long before, if it had been possible, I verily believed. For since that long-ago when an awful conviction fell upon me as I sat under my father's ministry, my sin-burdened heart had sent up its piteous pleadings and cries to Him hundreds and hundreds of times, with many tears of sorrow and penitence, begging for mercy; but all was vain. Still, I could not help praying, neither could I cease mourning over my sins; for I must pour out the troubles of my lost soul in confessions, supplications and tears; and this was the only solace I had.

Having married in January, 1850, we were living in Jasper County, Illinois, and my father and nearly all the family were there also. The crisis in my most forlorn life was drawing near and it

seemed that I could not endure and live very much longer; for my awful state of sinful wretchedness was growing more and more grievous, so that it was ever uppermost in my heart and mind, and for me there was no peace. Often in the late hours of night would I get up and go away in the darkness and weep and pray, not thinking that any one save God heard me. But I learned from my brother Mordecai long afterward that our father was so much troubled for me that he often arose and followed me out. But I was trying to hide all my troubles from him and all, and had no idea that he had heard my bitter mourning. It was after father's departure that my brother told me this.

One afternoon in April, 1850, I was fearfully impressed that I must die before the sun went down; so I took Elder Thompson's letter and went out to try to find a ray of comfort from reading it again, but so awful was my gloom the lines became blurred and I could not read it. Believing that the hour of my doom had come, I felt that I must return to the house and confess to my wife that God was just in cutting me off and ask her not to murmur against Him. As I walked from the door to the bed on which she was asleep, I felt that if I took another step toward her I should fall dead and this would greatly alarm her, therefore I turned and rested my arms and head on the mantle and groaned aloud. She quickly came to me and asked in alarm what was the matter. I told her that I was about to die, for I was too wicked a sinner for God to suffer to live any longer, and asked her to not complain against Him. She took my arm and asked me to sit down in the door with her, in view of the setting sun, and then tried to comfort me (for she was a Baptist and a Christian); but her words fell upon deaf ears. While we sat there and she talked to me a sudden transition came over me—not for the better, but for the worse. The deep mourning and fear of impending death passed away in a

moment, but instead of pardon and peace filling my heart with joy and gladness the hardened indifference of sullen despair and reprobation took possession of me, and I soon felt that I had passed into the hands of Satan, to be buffeted and tormented. Instantly the most horrid and blasphemous thoughts were injected into my mind with the rapidity of lightning, and I was powerless to prevent it. Not for the world would I have told my wife of this dreadful change in my state, and I could not say a word, but soon arose under the awful conviction that I was a vile and hardened reprobate, for whom there was no hope, nor pardon, nor mercy.

CHAPTER IV. TEMPTATIONS

Now I went forth into life again, but worse than before—alas! into a living torment, worse than death. True, I had ceased to weep and mourn and pray, but so far from being filled with love and peace and praise, my heart was hardened, my life was more bitter than death, and my lips would utter vile curses, for which I would immediately loathe myself.

The former years of deep mourning, heart-penitence and tearful supplications were blessed, when measured by the following months and years of horrible temptations and hardened despair. For now I was doubly sure God had cast me off forever, and that I was a Satan-abandoned reprobate, or given over to him to be tormented, "having no hope, and without God in the world" This was fearful.

Never before had I used profane words, but would have been shocked at the thought of profanity, but now the most horrid curses were darted through my mind, and when vexed, they would break out in words, in spite of my efforts to prevent it, and this caused me to hate myself and my wretched life. Oh! how could I be otherwise than most hateful in the sight of Him who is infinitely

holy?

In the time of my mourning over my lost condition I had tried to solace myself with the fact that I had lived a moral life, but now I realized that my very nature was a fountain of iniquity, and this overwhelmed me in the deepest self-abhorrence. For I was made to understand that, by lineal descent from the corrupted head of the human race, there had come down to me a corrupt existence, as a poisoned fountain, so that in every fiber of my being I was vile.

Now all this so embittered my blighted life that I felt it would be better to die, because I was only adding sin and making my deplorable case worse and worse; and my idea was that I should sin no more after being released from mortality; therefore, I was fearfully tempted to seek death. Indeed, on one occasion Satan drove me to the verge of self-destruction. I was plowing in a field of corn, and, becoming fretted at the horse, cursed it bitterly, and then the anguish of my spirit seemed unendurable. So, leaving the field, I entered a grove in the state of distraction, wanting to seek relief in some way; and there I verily felt the presence of Satan at my right hand, and that I was in his hateful power. I piteously asked him to release me from his horrid grasp, and audibly said: "Oh! have you not tormented me long enough?" I shudder to relate that the next moment I was impelled to cast myself on the ground, place the point of my dirk-knife over my heart, with my right hand on the handle, and the thought ran through my mind: "How quick I could end this miserable existence". But at that moment my hand became passive and powerless, as if arrested, and I said: "I cannot now, but I will soon". Never again was I so fearfully tempted. The Lord would suffer the tempter to go no further, but made a way for my escape.

As in the time of my mourning I sought to hide my troubles from those

about me, so now I could not bear the thought of any one knowing what a profane and miserable reprobate I was; therefore, only when alone would I utter the tormenting thoughts of vile profanity which were darted through my tortured mind. So I was greatly mortified on learning from my wife that she had been shocked by overhearing me once. Yet I knew the Omniscient One saw me as I was.

At this time my father preached in the settlement every alternate Sunday, and I usually attended. But I have a vivid remembrance of only one sermon. It was upon God's election and predestination of His people unto holiness and divine sonship. I felt within me a spirit of bitter irreconciliation and anger against this doctrine, and mentally saying, "I cannot and will not hear it", I left the house; for I felt that it was against me and cut me off. My intention was to go home, but while still within hearing of my father's voice my angry spirit gave way, a strong desire to return filled my heart. I halted and listened; I stood irresolute and trembling, and soon felt subdued, and contritely walked back in the house and heard the close of the sermon.

From that time I felt this opposition and hatred to God's righteous will no more; for I knew that He was infinitely wise and holy. But this rebellion in my heart at that time prepared me to ever after bear with and pity those who may feel as I then did, rather than condemn them; for, as Jesus said on the cross, "They know not what they do". By nature we were all the children of wrath, and God only can reconcile the poor, rebellious sinner to Himself, and give him the spirit of peace and a heart to love Him. Jesus alone can say to the angry waves: "Peace, be still".

At last those horrid and fiery temptations were taken away from me at times, and then my hard heart would become tender under a feeling sense of the goodness of God, and my despairing

and bitter spirit would be filled with sweet contrition. At such times my soul began again to cry out to God in prayer, and tears once more came to my relief. This was at the breaking of day to my darkened, chilled and famishing soul, after a long and fearful night in a horrible wilderness. O, the day-dawn and the day-star did indeed begin to arise in my hopeless heart! But, like the murmuring children of Israel, I wandered back and forth in the great and terrible wilderness a long time, until my soul was deeply humbled and shown that there was no goodness in me, before the merciful God of salvation delivered me out of the hand of my fierce tormentor, and brought me out of black despair into the light of His sweet and soul-cheering countenance. I can most truly say that my soul longed for His mercy, and I was led to feel that His favor was better than life. Therefore, with my whole heart I again sought the Lord in earnest, fervent supplication and prayer.

CHAPTER V

"THE MORNING COMETH"

At times, when riding alone over the beautiful, wild prairies of Illinois, and beholding the wonderful works of God, as evidences of His Being and power and goodness, my adoring spirit would implore Him aloud to be pleased to mercifully deliver me from the fowler's snare, from the power of the devil, and from the chains of darkness and bonds of sin and guilt, and give me a heart to love Him; that I might spend the rest of my time in His service and the service of His people. And, blessed be His holy name! the Lord out of His holy heaven heard my plaintive cries, pitied my forlorn state, my anguish and groans, rebuked my fierce accuser, and mercifully gave me freedom and rest from my long captivity and bitter temptations.

Yet, for a long time after this, I knew nothing of the way of life and salvation,

for I was as ignorant and helpless as an infant, and, indeed, very much like a passive child, conscious only that it exists. The years of my mourning and the time of my captivity to Satan had passed away, still I was not saved, and had no evidence that God loved me. It is true that I now had a feeling sense of His goodness to me as His unworthy creature, but that I either was or ever should be His child seemed impossible; for while He was infinitely holy, my past terrible experience had convinced me that I was wofully destitute of the least bit of righteousness or goodness. I felt the truth of the Scripture that says, "without holiness no man can see the Lord", therefore I could not hope to ever dwell in His holy presence. The time had been when I vainly hoped to become better by repentance and prayer and ceasing from sin, but all this had fearfully failed me and I had now ceased from my own works, yet was utterly empty, destitute and poor. This I knew and felt. How, then, could I hope to ever dwell with God in holy heaven? Although this was the all-absorbing desire of my heart and dearer than life, yet it seemed impossible to me.

At this time the awful sense and weight of sin and guilt and the fear of torment were gone from me, it is true, although I knew not when or why or how, and instead a spirit and feeling of quiet submission to the will of God filled my heart. If saved, I knew not how, if lost, I felt that it was just. Although I had no hope, yet I was not in the black despair of the fearful past. I may truly say, I wanted to sin no more. My sincere desire was to please and serve God, but I knew not how to do this; neither had I any power. All was mysterious to me, and even myself was a mystery.

With earnest wish to honor God and be useful to my fellow-creatures while I lived, I was led to engage in the study of medicine, and had finally entered a medical college in Cincinnati. While there I wrote a letter to my widowed sister

Sophia, relating to her some of my religious exercises and troubles. She read my letter to her pastor, Elder McQueary of the Conn's Creek church, and each of them wrote to me. On our way to the college Tuesday morning, April 25, 1854, I and my room-mates called at the post-office and these letters were received. I felt then I must return to my room and read them alone, and sent in my excuse to the faculty by the others. The letters revived all my past experience and were read with many tears. Elder McQueary advised and exhorted me in a fatherly way to come home to the church, do my duty and let it have my usefulness. He said that I was trying to place my mind and studies upon a vocation that the Lord had not intended me for, but He had another work for me. This came as a prophecy to me, and it deeply affected me; for I was ardently devoted to the healing art, and could not bear the thought of giving it up. I wept and prayed over these things until noon. The students urged me to return with them after dinner, but I again sent in my excuse, for I felt that I must be alone and commune with God. So I turned to the Bible for guidance and help; then knelt in earnest and tearful prayer to Him, beseeching Him to teach me His will. I felt to lie passive in His arms, and was willing to be anything or nothing, just as He would have me. There was nothing else I so desired as that I might be saved, and then be in the church with the Lord's blessed people. Long had I believed that He had a saved people and church in the world; but alas! I also felt that I was far, far away from them, as one alone on earth—an outcast.

So, after much heart-searching, I felt that it was impossible for me to go to the church and ask it to receive and baptize me. Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved". This shut me out, because I was not a believer in the Lord Jesus; for I was as ignorant of the way of salvation through Him as the benighted heathen, and did not

understand how I could be saved. Therefore, alone in the afternoon, I took up a pen to write to Elder McQueary to tell him that I could not comply with his kind request, and why I could not, although it would be to me the most blessed and happy privilege if I were entitled to it; but I had learned from the blessed Bible that believers in Jesus only had the divine right to this sacred ordinance and membership in the gospel church, and that it was not given me to believe in Him.

CHAPTER VI. SAVED!

O, how shall I fully set forth the wonderful revelation that the loving Father was pleased to give me just then? For when I was about to write that I could not go to the church because I was not a believer, that moment I did believe! yea, Jesus was revealed to me, the Lord, my righteousness! and with the eyes of my understanding I beheld Him in His holiness and exaltation as my altogether lovely Savior! Sweet peace then filled my entire being and my heart went out in love to God, my adored Father in heaven! O, it was so unlooked for, and so wondrous strange and new and heavenly! God, in Christ, had reconciled me to Himself, and my peace was perfect. Unto me the Sun of righteousness had risen with healing in His wings of life and light, and the long night of darkness was past. His perfect love had cast out all fear. The chief One among ten thousand was my Beloved, and He had loved me and owned me as His. How blessed! Jesus had died on the cross for me, and now He lived in me and I in Him. The salvation that was of Him was complete and glorious.

My loving heart at once went out to His brethren, the dear children of God, and the church that Christ loved and gave Himself for. And so I soon went on with my letter and told my now dear Brother McQueary of this divinely-given faith in Jesus, and that in Him I

was justified and saved, for He had covered me with the robe of righteousness and clothed me with the garments of salvation. So I told him that I was now more than willing to comply with his kind appeal to come home to the church, and would be at their May meeting, if it was the will of the Lord. Then I also wrote to my sister and wife of my sweet peace and joy in the Lord, who had saved me from the horrible pit of everlasting destruction. I now felt as a little child in my Father's kingdom, and that it would be my delight to do His righteous will. To Elder McQueary I said, "I am humble enough and willing to be anything or nothing, just as God will".

The ensuing Thursday night, as we were all silently occupied with our class work, Dr. Bland (a student) came in with an old man, and to my glad surprise Elder McQueary stood before me! It had been years since I had seen him—and O, what years they had been to me! He was on his way to a church some miles from the city, and had sought me out. The next morning we found the business place of Brother Howell, and in the evening we rode out home with him to attend the meetings on Saturday and Sunday. As Elder McQueary had not received my letter, I told him of my happy faith in Jesus, and he rejoiced with me.

This was the first time I had been in the country since spring and adorned nature in beauty and loveliness, and when I walked out the next morning at sunrise it seemed that I was in a bright, new world of charming beauty and praise, and my spirit was in a transport of delight and love. Under the preaching that day and the next my faith in the Lord Jesus was made to abound, and my heart was full of comfort, for it was the first time I had ever known the joyful sound of the gospel, the glad tidings of salvation.

But the dear old Elder cast a shadow over the sunlight of my soul by saying to

a company of Baptists at Brother Howell's: "I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, yet mark my words, the next time you hear of our young friend David he will be preaching the gospel".

When I returned to the college on Monday and tried to resume my studies it soon became evident to me that my mind and heart and interests were no longer there; that "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new". In vain I tried to keep up with my class as before, for I could not. The Bible had now become my text-book and the word of God was my meat and drink. So, after a few days' trial and failure, I gave it up and returned home to Illinois. My controlling desire now was to go home to my friends and tell them what great things the Lord had done for me, and how He had had compassion on me when I was ready to perish. But on account of the overflowed Wabash River we could not go until late in May, when I and my wife and little daughter Mary arrived at the home of my sister Sophia, near the dear old home of our departed parents and the church that they loved so well, which our father served as minister many, many years.

(Continued next month)

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ORIGINAL SOUTH ARKANSAS
ASSOCIATION MEETING

The next session is to be at Pilgrim Rest Church on Friday before the third Sunday in September, 1981 (Sept. 18, 19, 20). Pilgrim Rest Church is located off Highway 167 five miles north of Fordyce, Arkansas. Take Highway 273 about 1/2 mile to the church.

We dropped the business part of the Association and hold three days meeting at this same time each year.

Elder J. C. Townley
Route 2, Box 245
Fordyce, Arkansas 71742

SEVEN MILE ASSOCIATION

The next session of the Seven Mile Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing, with the church at Reedy Prong meeting house in Johnston County, N.C. Services are to begin Friday, September 18th at 11:00 A.M., Saturday the 19th at 9:30 A.M., and Sunday the 20th at 10:30 A.M.

The meeting house is located twelve miles southeast of Benson, N.C. on State Road #1124, between 50 and 55 highways. We invite the Elders, brethren, sisters, and friends to meet with us.

Elder W. D. Godwin, Moderator
Brother James G. Young, Clerk

FIVE MILE CREEK ASSOCIATION

The one hundred fourteenth annual session of the Five Mile Creek Old School Primitive Baptist Association will be held with New Hope Church on Friday and Saturday before, and the third Sunday in September, 1981 (Sept. 18, 19, 20).

New Hope Church is located about eleven miles northeast of Jasper, Alabama, to the right off Highway 69 on Sipsey Road.

All lovers of truth are welcome.

Elder H. C. Moon, Moderator
Route 1, Box 167A
Breman, Alabama
Phone (205) 287-1603

**SOUTH OUACHITA
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

The next session of the South Ouachita Primitive Baptist Association will convene with Rehobeth Church, located at El Dorado, Arkansas, five miles north on Highway 7 and 1/2 mile west of Williams' Store, beginning on Friday before the fourth Sunday in September, 1981. We cordially invite everyone who loves the truth as it is in Jesus Christ to visit with us.

C. C. Wilbanks

**SMITH RIVER
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

The Lord willing the Smith River Association will be held at Salem Church, in Floyd Co. Va., on route 221, Sept. 4, 5 and 6, with Mountain View Church acting as the host church.

We invite all our brothers and sisters that are in peace and good standing at home to come and be with us.

Elder Roy Agee
Rt. 1, Copper Hill, Va. 24079

**KEHUKEE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION 1981**

The Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association for the year of 1981 will be held at William Primitive Baptist Church in Edgecombe County the first Sunday in October, Saturday before and Monday following. (October 3, 4, 5)

William Primitive Baptist Church is located on Secondary Road No. 1428, three tenths of a mile west of Highway No. N.C. 44. Those coming from the *north* traveling I95 come to Weldon, N.C., then take U.S. 301 South passing Enfield, N.C., to Whitakers, N.C. to intersection of U.S. 301 and N.C. No. 44, turn left on N.C. 44 (east), go 11.8 miles to secondary road No. 1428 on right, turn right

three-tenths miles to church on right side.

Those coming from the *south* and *east* go to Tarboro, N.C., take N.C. 44 out of Tarboro north to Leggett. Continue on N.C. 44, 1.9 miles to Secondary Road No. 1428, turn left and go 3 tenths mile to church on right.

Those coming from the *southwest* travel I 95 to Rocky Mount, N.C. to intersection of I 95 and N.C. 97. Turn right on N.C. 97 (east) go to Leggett, N.C. to intersection of N.C. 97 and N.C. 44. Turn left on N.C. 44, go 1.9 miles to secondary road No. 1428, turn left and go 3 tenths miles to church on right.

Those coming from the *west* come to Rocky Mount, N.C. In Rocky Mount get on N.C. 97 east and go to Leggett to intersection of N.C. 97 and N.C. 44, turn left on N.C. 44 and go 1.9 miles to secondary road No. 1428. Turn left on secondary road No. 1428 and go 3 tenths miles to church on right.

We extend an invitation to Old School Primitive Baptists who are in peace and order at home and abroad and all the dear friends to come and visit us at our two hundred sixteenth session of the Old Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association.

In bonds and afflictions,
Marvin E. Garner, Clerk

"Grace, tis' a charming sound,
Harmonious to the ear.
Heaven with the echo shall resound;
And all the saints shall hear."

If I am to write, I must have a text. If I am to have a text, it must be dropped into my soul by the Spirit of God. The text must come with unction and power and sweetness from above. God once promised that the desert shall blossom as the rose. If ever anything could qualify as a desert, then my mind and heart can. When left to myself - which I often feel to be - I am the most desolate, empty, dry, parched, barren wasteland one could imagine. My mind is the habitation of lizards and unclean things. Unless the heavenly rain and Divine breeze come upon me, no tender, spiritual thought or feeling can survive for more than a fleeting moment. How can I, then, take up my pen to glorify the power of freewill!? Dare such an eternal

debtor to Sovereign Mercy rant about the works, wisdom, power, or merit of the creature!? I may never be able to express myself in a satisfactory manner concerning the grace, mercy, power, wisdom, and glorious Sovereignty of the Eternal Jehovah; but may my hands rot with leprosy and my eyes be eaten by worms before I exalt the creature and give human merit a chance to vie with Divine Grace!

From time to time the Gracious God of Heaven is pleased to shine into this desolate desert and cause it to blossom as the rose - the Rose of Sharon, our Altogether Lovely Lord Jesus Christ. Paul prayed for the Philippians, that they might be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." (Phil. 1:11) The fruits (not dead works) of righteousness are "By Jesus Christ," He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the Rose; and it is He which causes His people (A desert in themselves) to blossom. He, by the power of grace, transforms them and conforms them to His image. O come, Heavenly wind, and blow on this desert. Bring the sweet fragrance of my Beloved to refresh my soul!

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." (Isa. 35:1)

God's people - His peculiar people - are described in this verse under three appellations: The wilderness, the solitary place, and the desert.

The sons of grace are by nature and by experience, a wilderness. They find their souls grown up with wild plants, thorn bushes, poison vines, and all manner of worthless confusion. A wilderness is a wild place - a place uninhabitable - a place of confusion. When God gives us light to see ourselves as we are, we cry out at the confusion and wildness of our souls. We see it as an uninhabitable place, and say, "Can the God of grace dwell here?!"

The Lord's peculiar people find themselves to be a solitary place. Instead of being as good as the rest, or even bad like the rest, they feel themselves to be especially hopeless. Their's is a felt misery. All the crutches of self-righteousness which prop up worldly professors can do them no good. They are cut off from the rest and made to cry, "Is there anyone like me?" The saints of God are solitary - separated from the world - alone in their trials, as far as the help of man is concerned. They are a unique people. No one can know or understand them, because they have an experience unknown in nature.

A desert, also, is descriptive of the saints. In themselves they are and feel to be as dry, lifeless, barren and parched as any desert. They are unable to generate life or being forth fruit.

What can be done for such a people? To what can they be pointed for hope? In what can they rejoice or take comfort? Surely not in a self-help program can they find relief! Undoubtedly any exhortations to do better and pattern their lives after any great example will only cause them to rend their garments in frustration. No! The only hope for such desperate creatures is in a free grace gift. "Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us." (Isa. 26:12)

The promise to these hopeless creatures is that they shall be glad, shall rejoice, and shall blossom as the rose. Verse two tells us, "the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." To whom can this be referring but the Lord Jesus Christ?! He is given to His people! "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." He is the Rose of Sharon! He is the excellency of our God! O, dear saints, what beside Jesus Christ can cause you to rejoice, be glad and blossom when you feel to be a desert solitary wilderness?!

The little flock of Christ is a people of

weak hands and feeble knees. They once were strong and valient. They could run unwearied and could wield their swords; but God has blown on them and caused the grass to wither and the flower to fade. He has wasted all their "pleasant things." God casts down His people from their own strength. He shows it up for what it is. Now He tells his ministers to "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees." (vs. 3) How can this be done? God doesn't leave us to guess. The next verse tells us. "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you."

Dear brethren, what good would it ever do for a trembling child of God if all the preachers in the world told him to "Be strong and fear not" and left it at that?! One could exhort me to be strong. One could explain to me that it is my duty to fear not. One could show me all the commandments and enjoin upon me my responsibility to be strong and fear not until judgment day, and I would be no better off and no more able to be strong or fear not until I hear the Promise - "Your God will come . . . He will come and save you!" This is what does my soul good! It is the free-grace, gospel promise that lays hold of my soul with power. Until the promise comes, all else only serves to beat me lower and lower.

What takes place when the promise comes? What effect does Jesus Christ applied to the heart by the power of God have? What follows when our God comes and saves us? "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break forth, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a

way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, or any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. 35:5-10)

Nothing has ever succeeded in moving, strengthening, enlivening and delivering the exercised saints of God but the free gospel of Jesus Christ. When Christ in His fulness and freeness is lifted up before the eyes of His people, then they are enabled by the power of God to "run with patience the race that is set before them." To try to supplement the freeness of the Gospel promise is to dilute its power and confuse the children of God and to entangle them again with a yoke of bondage, which they cannot bear.

God grant us to look unto Jesus as our All in all for time and eternity, that His free grace may enliven and convey us through every trial and challenge of this life unto that eternal, heavenly Kingdom, is the prayer of an unworthy servant.

Shannon Vaughn
Winnsboro, Texas

ELDER BEEBE'S EDITORIALS

Elder Gilbert Beebe is a name well known to the readers of the *Signs of the Times*. His great influence will be felt among us till our Lord returns. No Old School Baptist ever bore a greater influence or commanded more respect. From 1832, when Elder Beebe started the *Signs of the Times*, until his death in 1881 he shined as the foremost light (in Christ) among Old School Primitive Baptists.

Elder Beebe was an untiring writer,

chiefly composing editorials and answering inquiries for subscribers. In his nearly fifty years as an editor he wrote on hundreds of texts and practically every subject of religion that ever involved the Church. No human being can ever fully know the worth of these labors, and the extent they were blessed of God, but we may be assured they were extensive beyond calculation.

There is now very serious plans being developed to publish in a six or possibly seven volume set of books, the complete editorial works of Elder Beebe from the beginning of the *Signs* to the time of his death. This would probably consist of well over three thousand five hundred (3,500) pages, measuring 6" X 9" per page, in type about the same size as now used in the *Signs*.

As should be expected, this will be a very expensive undertaking and involve a considerable risk, financially. Let it be noted that funds for this project will come from private sources and not involve one penny of the funds belonging to the *Signs of the Times, Inc.*

As we are now fairly close to either going ahead with the project, two books at a time, (or possibly three) or scrapping the idea, we need now, as soon as possible, the views of our readers on this important undertaking.

If you are seriously interested in this work, or know of others that would be, then please write to us and let us know your feeling. NOTE! we are not asking for orders at this time! We only need to determine how much interest there is for us to proceed.

We believe with all our heart that this will be a valuable contribution to the Baptist cause. If you think so too, then by all means tell us so. As far as we know there has never been a project of this magnitude from the pen of an Old School or Primitive Baptist.

Write now to:

Elder James F. Poole
P.O. Box 1250
Salisbury, Maryland 21801

**INTRODUCTORY PREFACE BY
 ELDER GILBERT BEEBE
 TO THE FIRST VOLUME OF HIS
 EDITORIALS 1868**

From the early settlement of our country by the Puritians in New England, and the Church of England in the Southern colonies, whose religious supremacy was established by law in their several localities, the Baptists, and indeed all other dissenting orders, suffered great opposition by proscription and oppression from the dominant parties. The Baptists, perhaps, more than any other, were violently treated, and suffered the most cruel persecution. Disfranchisement as citizens, fines, confiscation of property, incarceration in prisons, and banishment for nonconformity, to which was added corporal punishments, public whippings at the stocks, cropping of ears, boring their tongues through with hot irons, tying their heads and feet together, and torturing them in the most barbarous manner for days and nights, and in many cases they were put to death for their persistent and inflexible adherence to the faith and order of the gospel by which they were distinguished from all other orders. In those days of trial there were no worldly inducements offered to attract the worldly-minded to connect themselves with our churches, and there was harmony of sentiment and uniformity of practice among the Baptist churches throughout the whole breadth of our country.

It is true that in those trying times, the general principles of the doctrine of the gospel were not so clearly and fully preached and understood as at earlier and later periods in the history of Apostolic Baptists. As the Bible doctrine and order of baptism held by them was the most objectionable to their adversaries, they were constantly called to defend the truth in relation to that ordinance against the assaults of their opponents. And when the violence of persecution began to abate, and by the

interposition of the British Crown, and subsequently by the prevalence of more liberal views which were entertained by the patriots of the Revolution, the powers of the Puritians in the East, and of the Episcopalians in the South were so far curtailed as to prevent farther corporal severities; still for many years after the establishment of our federal and state governments, the Puritians of the New England States were patronized by their state legislatures, and allowed to collect their parish tax from all within their parish limits. Afterwards dissenters, by procuring certificates from religious denominations to which they belonged, certifying that they were paying to their own respective orders, were released from the burden of the parish taxes, and finally the whole legal distinction in favor of the Puritians was abolished. Under all the trials and persecutions thus far experienced, the Baptists were a humble, meek, loving and harmoniously-united people throughout our country. But as soon as this oppressive yoke was broken, Satan was ready with other elements of discord to bring trouble and divisions into our churches.

No sooner were the Baptists of America relieved from the galling yoke of Puritanic and Episcopalian priestcraft than the doctrines of Andrew Fuller were introduced, with the professed design to raise up the Baptists from the dung-hill, to rank respectably with other religious denominations. All who were inclined to the doctrine of Arminianism, with many others who had been led but sparingly into an understanding of the cardinal doctrine of salvation alone by grace, were ready to embrace the plausible and deceptive views of Fuller, and became at once ambitious for the promised elevation.

At this period, which is still fresh in the recollection of the editor of the "*Signs of the Times*," there was not known among the Baptists of America a single organized institution in

connection with, or under the patronage of the Baptists. Theological seminaries, on a very small scale, then began to be talked of, and a small school of this kind was started in Philadelphia, under the direction of Dr. Staughton, to give some grammar lessons to a few of our illiterate young preachers, and soon a college was founded in Washington City, and another educational and theological institution at Hamilton, N.Y., and similar schools began to spring up in various directions. Simultaneously with these, missionary enterprises were set on foot, both domestic and foreign, and Sabbath-schools and Sabbath-school unions, in which various denominations were recognized as hand and glove with Baptists in building up these unscriptural nurseries for the church, as they were modestly called. Then followed Bible Societies, to give a semblance of piety to the whole system of religious machinery, followed in turn by Tract Societies, Temperance Societies, Magdaline Societies, Dorcas Societies, and a host of other equally unscriptural institutions under the name of Benevolence and Religion, until, to bring up the rear, the Abolition Society, which had for a time been struggling into life and power under the patronage of a few New England fanatics, was with due ceremony let in and adopted as a pet institution.

While these innovations were being made upon the faith and order of the Baptists, true enough, the Baptists began to rise, according to the prediction of Andrew Fuller, and soon came to be regarded as unsound and as respectable as any other of the worldly churches of this degenerate age. The Baptists were now no longer obliged to pray the Lord of the harvest to furnish preachers; they could supply themselves with a more refined and educated class from their own schools. Converts could now be made to order, and the churches supplied with members from their

nurseries and other institutions. Their machinery was now so complete that grace was no longer needed to make their members orderly; for they were supplied with societies to keep them sober and benevolent; and if perchance many of them should lose their piety, their machinery was so ingeniously geared that they could be run through again, and re-converted as often as might be thought advisable.

It was during the prevalence of these abominations that the "*Signs of the Times*" was commenced. The new order of Baptists had many religious newspapers in the field, which without an exception advocated the institutions named in the foregoing, and the general impression was entertained that there were no churches or preachers left that had not enlisted in this new enterprise for worldly popularity and respectability. A few were found here and there, isolated and despised, who sighed and groaned on account of the prevailing abominations. Yet few as we were, and far between, we were denounced violently as illiberal, inert, slothful, behind the spirit of a progressive age, and enemies to the spread of the gospel, and opposed to all that is good.

Feeling deeply the need of a medium of correspondence, and excluded from the columns of the so-called Baptist papers, after much deliberation it was concluded to attempt to make ourselves heard by our brethren scattered abroad, by publishing a paper devoted to the cause of truth, and through which we could enter our solemn protest against all the innovations, new theories and new institutions which, under the name of Baptists, had so greatly prevailed. With these objects in view, in the year 1832, we issued the following prospectus, viz:

Proposals for publishing a semi-monthly paper, to be called the "*Signs of the Times*," devoted exclusively to the Baptist cause, maintaining inviolably the following scriptural sentiments:

1. The Existence, Sovereignty, Immutability, Omnipotence and Eternal Perfections of the Great Jehovah — the Revelation which God has given of himself, as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. "These Three are One." — 1 John 5:8.

2. The Absolute Predestination of all things.

3. Eternal, Unconditional Election.

4. The Total Depravity and just condemnation of fallen man.

5. That the Atonement and Redemption of Jesus Christ are for the Elect only.

6. The Sovereign, Irresistible, and in all cases, Effectual work of the Holy Spirit, in Regenerating and Quickening the Elect of God.

7. The Final Preservation and Eternal Happiness of all the sons of God, by Grace.

8. The Resurrection of the dead, and Eternal Judgement.

9. That the Church of Christ is composed exclusively of Baptized Believers — that to her are given able ministers of the New Testament: that the Scriptures are the only divinely authorized Rule of Faith and Practice for the saints of God.

10. That there is no connection between Church and State, and as touching the proposition for a marriage between them, the Hon. R. M. Johnson, in his Report on the Sabbath Question, has expressed our faith.

The "*Signs of the Times*" will be decidedly opposed to Bible, Tract and Missionary Societies, Theological Seminaries, Sabbath Schools, &c., &c., making war with the mother, Arminianism, and her entire brood of Institutions.

The violent opposition manifested by the New Order of Baptists, when our Prospectus appeared, was overruled to our advantage. Immediately on its appearing the batteries of our opponents were opened against us, through both the pulpit and the press. The papers of the New School sounded the alarm and warned the people to beware of the forthcoming paper; and in the Minutes of many Associations the churches were warned to withhold their support and countenance from us. In the ardor of their zeal portions of our Prospectus were copied to show that we were hostile to their newly-invented institutions; and by this means, instead of retarding, as they designed, their efforts were of great service in letting those who were imprisoned among them know that such a paper was about to be published. The response to our

Prospectus from all directions was liberal, so that we were able to proceed with our work. Thirty-five years have since elapsed, and thirty-five volumes of our paper have been published, and still the publication is sustained, and we are now enabled to greatly enlarge and improve it.

The publisher of the "*Signs of the Times*" has been, from time to time, charged with vacillation, changing his views, or departing from the principles formerly held. Let the readers compare the articles here re-published with the platform laid in the Prospectus, and judge for themselves, if there has been any departure from the principles first announced.

One important object in the compilation of this book is to present, in as condensed a form as may be, the most important Editorial articles which have been published from the commencement, in 1832, whereby to show what has been sustained by the entire Old School or Primitive order of Baptists for so many years, and incidentally to embody such historical reminiscences as may be useful, not only to the present, but to succeeding generations. Many of the articles which we shall reproduce will necessarily allude to what the Old School Baptists have held, the manner in which they have asserted and defended their faith, and what they have encountered of reproach and persecution, and the divine support by which they have been sustained.

It is not claimed that all the supporters of the "*Signs of the Times*" are pledged to endorse all the articles which have been published, and are herein re-published, for such is not the fact. Some of the articles may set forth the peculiar views of but a minority of the Baptists of our faith and order, and for whatever of error any of them contain, only the Editor is responsible. But inasmuch at the "*Signs of the Times*" was the first periodical paper

devoted to the Old School or Primitive Baptist cause, and the only one of some twenty periodicals which have subsequently been started that has been sustained by the Baptists of our order, it must be inferred that it has faithfully reflected the general sentiments of that people, to the support of whose cause it has been humbly devoted.

We do not propose a reproduction of all that has appeared under the Editorial head of the "*Signs of the Times*," for there are many items of a local interest, bearing on what has long ceased to be of general interest. And some articles on the same subjects, which would appear tautologous and uncalled for. Still it is our intention, so far as possible, to condense, in such cases, the substance of the several articles on the same subject, so as to preserve all that is deemed of sufficient importance to be preserved.

GILBERT BEEBE

Dear Brother Williams,

I've been planning to send you this writing of my Mother's for some time. She passed away in 1968 and we didn't find it until last July. It did my heart good to read it. I hope to write something that's been sweet to me some day, if the Lord will guide my pen.

I've missed seeing you and Sister Williams for some time. Hope you can feel like coming back down soon. I love all God's children and I hope He guides me as not to miss a one.

Much love,
Hollis Griswald

May 20, 1956

Brother and Sister King
Dear Ones in Christ,

This is the second time I've made the attempt to write you and tell you some things I feel has been the dealings of the Lord with me.

Long many years ago I dreamed I was surrounded by flames of fire and could

see no way out. I stepped over to my mother-in-law and asked her to pray for me. She turned and walked away. There I was to perish in those flames of fire, but yet I never felt any heat from the fire. There my dream ended. After this I was so stirred up I was afraid to go to sleep, afraid I would die and go to hell for it looked like hell would be my lot. I was in this condition for quite a while.

Then I had another dream. I was going down the spring path to find a low place to pray to the Lord to have mercy on me or I'd perish. I went down a corn row and dropped on my knees and began praying. All at once I felt as light as a feather. I raised up and looked up in the sky. I saw the most beautiful light. In this light the cross appeared. The light and the cross began moving, going from me. I got so light I floated up in the air. I was following the light and cross. Then my dream ended.

This dream has meant a lot to me in my feelings with many more I've had since.

I've been made to feel so unworthy. I wanted to go to Associations and get there before anyone else got there and crawl up under the stand and bury myself in the dust and hear the elders preach and not be seen.

I believe the reason I had this feeling is because I feel to be the little end of nothing and don't feel worthy of being noticed by the saints of God; the ones I've been made to love, I hope for Christ sake.

After I asked for a home with you dear people at McCray (I don't remember just how long I felt like this), I felt I had deceived God's saints, and I was deceived in myself. I lay on my bed and prayed to God to show me if I was a deceiver. After so long I fell asleep and I dreamed I came out of my bedroom and saw a light shining in the dining room. I said to someone, "I'm going and turn off the lights in the kitchen". But when I reached up to pull the cord the electric lights were not on but the most beautiful

light was shining down through the kitchen overhead. I looked all around and everything looked as white as snow, even my clothes and feet were white.

If you will bear with me and this awful writing, I will say a few more words. When the Association was at Mebane the time before last year, I came home from the Association early Saturday. I was so heavily burdened I felt I could hardly stand to live. I thought it was because my two sons were going in the Army. I was standing at my cabinet preparing lunch for the next day and I looked out the window at those two pecan trees. I'll never be able to tell what a beautiful sight I saw. It looked like every leaf was glittering in God's Spirit. I felt so lifted up that I spoke these words, "Praise God. Praise His Holy Name". I felt like it was the tree of life I had received in my soul, but it wasn't long before I was going around with a bowed head again.

Addie Rudd Oakley

EDITORIAL

"PROVE ALL THINGS: HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD"

I Thess. 5:21

Once again through the mercy of God, and according to arrangements made by the editorial staff I come before you to speak of these precious things most surely believed among us.

As far as the apostle speaks concerning God's dear children, it is my mind that he is addressing men of God, and that his command means exactly what he says, no more, and no less. That the command is applicable to men of God, men of faith, and to no one else I doubt not. The things which we are to prove are things related to the doctrine, practice, order, discipline and all other things pertaining to the life of God's humble children. As far as I am concerned, I do not have any assignment from God as a minister of the gospel of grace

to prove the metric system superior over any other system, and thus to hold to one in preference to another. The things under consideration, I am to prove; those things that prove to be good, I am to hold fast to them. The things that I prove, and that prove to be good, I am to approve of them, and I am to hold fast to them.

There are two ways of salvation mentioned in the Bible. One of them is proved and approved by the Bible; like one of them is proved in the experience of God's children and thus approved by them, as the apostle proved and approved by inspiration that only Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners. The text tells us to prove this, and to approve of it by holding fast to it. Have you got a better text than that? Is there anything in or out of the Bible that is better to have proved, and then to approve of it by holding fast to it? If we really and truly are in fellowship and in harmony with the apostle Paul, that is the one text that is proved for us and in us by the Holy Ghost taking Paul's language and showing it unto us. It is the truth; the whole truth; in fact it is the only text that we need for time and eternity; it is the only text we need in this world below, and it will be the subject of our eternal praises in that home of the soul, and still further, that we might know the importance of holding on to it, it is the one text that in every detail fulfills the message of the angel to Joseph, to wit, "He shall save His people from their sins."

As far as the established and manifested role of both the truth and falsehood, both the truth in regard to salvation, and falsehood as it relates to the false system, Paul has forever settled that question for us. If the scores of times that he tells us that it is by grace that we are saved does not arrest and convince and settle and establish them in the doctrine of saving grace, what will do it? He is of God, and they that are of God hear him; they that are not of

God do not and will not hear him, hence they that are of God proves all things by the written word of God, and rejoice in what they have proven and are holding to it. Those that are not yet brought to see the veracity of God in saving sinners have no proof of salvation, have nothing to hold fast to for this time state or the eternal ages to come.

On the other hand, if the number of times that Paul tells us that it is not by works which we have done does not prove anything to men regardless of their clamoring about it, they have only a shadow to hold to, and that is the weakest and the least beneficial of anything ever advocated for salvation.

From the first words in Genesis to the last word of Revelation there is not an occasion when the creature moved upon God for the purpose of glorying in Him or of praising His great and holy name. The devil and all devilish powers moved upon Him, and upon His little children with destruction and misery, greedy avarice and cruel malice for the purpose of destroying something that God had displayed, but never to come to Him as a needy sinner. This being true and this being our proof that it is thus and so, no man has ever desired and made a Bible effort toward obtaining that salvation that is alone in Jesus Christ. Every time that help has been accorded God's people, it has been because that God first loved them, and that because of His love for them, that He initiated every movement toward rescuing them from the dilemma into which they had plunged themselves by their own transgression.

Some things devolve upon us to prove, and among these things are all of the things that Paul had in mind in the text. However, it is not obligatory on poor sinners, nor do they have a right to prove the truthfulness of His work. One instance of His given word or promise, one display of His efficient work to that end is the proof itself. This proof is

always being brought to the persecuted and afflicted people of God. I cannot prove this to my brethren; it is not left for me to do so. Poor indeed would be the corroborative evidence that we gather up while journeying through this land where Satan is ever suggesting to us that our hope is not worth anything, for, says he, if it was you would not be so often feeling absent from the Lord and at home in the body. Ah, no, dear readers, we have, that is, if it is for a sinner like me, a surer and better word that has ever, or that will ever go forth out of a mortal man.

Yes, I often fear that I know nothing as I ought; yes, I admit to travelling much at night, not having any light, but I do know that the children of God have the truth of God's saving grace proven over time and again to them. The saving grace, and the life giving power that He proved by the spoken word and by demonstration is still in force today. The power in what he said has not diminished one whit; the mighty proof and power in His promises to His sorrowing and faint hearted disciples is still in force. The proof is still in effect; our Intercessor is still at His Father's right hand for the ones that He spoke to nearly two thousand years ago, and the innumerable hosts since then. The Holy Spirit has carried that proof of what He said and did to the hearts of believers. Everything else of time, including all creatures, have failed; they have not proved to this host of saved sinners that they were equal to saving, but Jesus has proven, not only once, but over and over, time after time, that He saves, and being their proof, they are holding fast to that precious proof.

The promise has ever been, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Israel had this proven to them time and again, even down to every single promise (I Kings 8:56). God's dear people have not been forsaken. They never will be forsaken,

Do you want proof of this my love?

Calv'ry survey - then heaven above;
See how the ransomed millions bow:

My grace sufficient is for you.

I'll guide you safely in the way,

Thru life's dark night, to heaven's bright day;

And there with wonder you shall view,

My grace sufficient was for you.

My heart and mind is enraptured at the thought, that while conceding that it was necessary for Him to leave, He would not leave them comfortless, but that He would send them another Comforter. Now what was His work to be? The saving of them with an eternal salvation! I suppose some of us would say was about to begin. Now is that right? If the impending death was to do that it has enough merit about it for it to be said; for it to be proved, and for it to be held fast. If it was to lack anything at all, it surely was important enough for us to know what it lacked of eternally saving us, and surely there is proof somewhere if it lacked. With malice toward none, but without regard to any man's person, I take the position that in His resurrection and ascension, it was proved by all the official power and wisdom of heaven that it was thus proven.

Now when did the work of the Holy Comforter begin? What did we say that work was, yea, what was proven that that work was, and what have the children of God been holding fast to, or, let me change that, to wit; what has been holding them since then? Just what kind of doctrine did He encourage them to rejoice in, to take courage in? Was He leaving them to their own resorts? If so, give chapter and verse. If not, please be quite, for I am asking.

On many sides (I am talking about Primitive Baptists) there is an urgent appeal being made for us to "get on the move, to get better acquainted with God, to stir ourselves into a state of activity, that we might get out of the stagnation that we are in." I heard it recently, among my beloved brethren, in my beloved deep Southland that "our stand

on the doctrine had stagnated us." I have heard it from too many." Let us do more talking about loving one another and less about the mooted questions." Back I go to His death. Did He save us by it? If the weeping disciples came away from His burial because He had failed, we have not got any truth, and we have not got any proof, and we have not got anything to hold to slow or fast.

I take the position that we have been, since His death, under the dominion of the Comforter. Let me ask again: What was His work to be? Was it to comfort, or to comfort at? Beating about the bush is useless, dear readers. He was left in charge of the affairs of God's dear children. If I am not sadly mistaken it has been proven by the evidence furnished by Jesus Christ and that Comforter to my poor heart and soul that the Comforter is to be our guide into all truth. Oh, the comfort and the joy, that this Comforter is going to be exactly like the Father and like the Son. He is not going to do things in a half way measure. Where the work of Christ was finished, the work of the Comforter was to follow, and He was to deal in the same divine blessings that had began in the eternal mind of God (you tell me when they begin, for I shall, with all the proof that heaven affords, tell you how well and how long and how completely that He will take care of the sorrowing disciples that the Saviour left behind when He ascended to glory). The apostle Paul sweetly tells us that He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all (all those sorrowing disciples before and after His crucifixion), and that He cannot do otherwise than give us all things with Him.

This Comforter has been proven the guide into all truth. There is not another way into this truth. There is not a branch of learning into which the human intellect can enter and come to a knowledge of the tried truth. It is hid from the wise as a group, and revealed

unto babes in Christ. It can not be attained save at the feet of Christ, and this Holy Comforter guides a sinner into all the truth likewise. Not only does He take the things of Christ and shows them unto you, but he also guides you into all truth. Furthermore, He comes in the Father's name, and teaches you all things, and too, He brings to our remembrance whatsoever He had said unto us.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Here is your strength, here is your uniform of righteousness, here are the happy moments that He has spent with you in past visits and conversations, and when the days come when the clouds hang heavy, and you are feeling to be a castaway, this inseparable Comforter will bring to fond remembrance His promise never to leave nor forsake you.

As the Lord is pleased to give us to glean the text for a morsel, may we ever remember that it is good when the heart is established in grace, and not in meats. Meats may offend all without the proof of the effectual working and dwelling in us of the Comforter, and will leave us in the clutches of Job's miserable comforters as they peddle their wares that no saint, no Saviour, no divine author ever proved true, but when the Holy spirit, the Comforter, purges us of that which binds, imprisons God's people, that the removal of the dross of the flesh will bring every heir of promise today to say, "I know that my Redeemer lives."

In conclusion, may God illuminate our minds that we might think soberly, walking in the Spirit, as we have been arrested and as we receive it, ever looking to our guide, our Teacher, our Daysman, staying away from and not blowing upon strange fire, and not walking in the sparks which we have made, knowing full well that God will not give His glory to another, but that any, yes, any, that seeks any other

doctrine than sovereign grace will of a certainty, lie down in sorrow.

Elder W. D. Griffin

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

PROVERBS 22:6

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

(In reply to a sister who has desired our views upon the text.)

The Proverbs of Solomon are short sentences of wisdom, which, while proverbially true in their literal application, as a general thing, are more immediately designed for the spiritual instruction of the children of wisdom; hence Wisdom is personified as giving divine instruction to her children, by whom she is ever justified. In many parts of the book of Proverbs the address is made to "My son," "My children," &c., and in chapter seven Wisdom is the speaker. "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?" Our Lord Jesus Christ is of God made unto us (his saints) wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, for in him is found all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. To them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, he is the wisdom of God and the power of God.

Admitting, then, as we must, that these proverbs are given by divine inspiration, we are to receive them as addressed to us by our divine Instructor, the Lord Jesus Christ, who says: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly." And of whom God's voice, in the cloud of transfiguration, said, "Hear ye him." In literalizing the proverb now under consideration, its beauty and truth do not appear, for there is no human wisdom so perfect as to secure infallibly the result which is contemplated in our text. In Solomon's own case there was an apparent failure. His father,

according to the flesh, was David, the man after God's own heart, and Solomon himself says: "I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words; keep my commandments, and live." Certainly Solomon was as brilliant an example of good breeding as we can find, yet we are told that when he became old outlandish women caused him to err. In his old age he was led to idolatry by his strange wives; and in our day we have many sad examples of the kind. How many anxious parents have taken all the pains in their power in the discipline and education of their children, and yet those children have in many instances departed from all the wholesome instructions and judicious counsels which had been lavished upon them in early life, while instances have not been infrequent wherein children who have in childhood and youth been exposed to the most unwholesome instructions and most pernicious examples have risen to eminence, and in old age been found among the best citizens in the world. Although the course suggested by the proverb commends itself to the wise, it does not give assurance that human care and prudence shall always be successful.

Many experiments have been tried by the wise and prudent of this world to improve the condition of mankind, and much discussion has been had on the question, In what way should a child be trained? The ancient Pharisees boasted their superior advantages, having the law and the covenants with them, of training their children, but we are told they made their pupils twofold more the children of hell than they themselves were, and our modern Pharisees, by Sabbath Schools, infant and Bible classes and Theological seminaries, have succeeded no better. The present generation has been raised and educated and trained under the full

power of all this humanly invented religious machinery, thoroughly drilled in Sunday Schools. We have often been told that when they became old they would be pious christians and good citizens, but what do we see as the result of all this kind of training? A more wicked, murderous, heaven-defying generation probably has never been upon the earth since the deluge. He that sitteth in the heavens has laughed, and God has had them in derision. (Psalms 2:4.) According to his unerring word. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." But as we object to the use or abuse to which our text is and has been prostituted by ancient and modern Pharisees, we will give our esteemed sister and our readers generally such light as we have upon its true and spiritual meaning.

Understanding Christ as head over all things to his church, as personated by Wisdom, and as such set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was, as the Head of his spiritual family and Husband of his church, or his Jerusalem which is above, which is free and which is the mother of all the legitimate children of wisdom, we shall regard the admonition and instruction of our text as addressed by him to the church, the Lamb's wife, the spiritual mother of the family, directing her to "train up" her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. None can successfully dispute that this application of our text most fully and beautifully expresses the instruction of Christ to his church, in regard to the discipline of his household. The church of God is under a most solemn charge from him whom her soul loveth, to train up her sons and daughters in the fear of the Lord. She is solemnly charged to see to it that all his laws and ordinances, precepts and examples, doctrine and order, be faithfully taught and constantly observed by all her children, and who has ever known a heaven-born son or

daughter of the church of the living God, who has been trained from the infancy of their spiritual experience under the faithful administration of the word of truth, well instructed in the doctrine of Christ and constantly habituated to take the Scriptures as the man of their counsel, standard of their faith and rule of their conduct from their first connection with the church until their heads have whitened with age, that has not become well established in word and doctrine?

In the nature of the figure it is the peculiar office of the wife to instruct her household to honor and obey their father and their mother in all things, and as a mother her children are placed under her peculiar care and instruction; they are directed to look to her for succor, instruction and consolation. She is an helpmeet for him who is the "everlasting Father" of all her children. He bids her train them in the way they should go. To train is to exercise, to instruct, to keep them in the practice, to drill and accustom them to the constant practice of that in which they are to be trained.

Practically, the church of Christ, walking in all the order of the house of God, sees that sin is not suffered to rest unrebuked on any of her children. She has maternal charge as well as love for them all. She receives to her bosom the "newborn babe" as soon as it is born, feeds it with the sincere milk of the word, which flows from the breasts of her consolation; she attends to their numerous wants, hears and understands their cries for bread, or feeds them on milk, as she knows their condition and age can bear, teaches them to talk and turns to them a pure language, that they may not speak in a mongrel or half Ashdod dialect, instructs them how to spell and pronounce Shibboleth and every other password or countersign required of those who are of the household of God. She sees that not a morsel of food from

the pulpit, or elsewhere, goes into the mouth that is unwholesome; she examines well that there be no wild gourds served up by young and inexperienced prophets; that there be no "death in the pot" from which they are to feed. She has a charge to see that their clothing is in good order, white and clean, unspotted from the world, undefiled and unpolluted. Her Husband has stored the wardrobe well. The garments of salvation, the robe of righteousness, garments of praise and raiment of fine needlework are there; she is to see to it that they are seasonably put on, carefully protected from pollution and duly appreciated; she has a special charge in training them, to keep them out of bad company, for her Husband in one of his proverbs of wisdom has told her that "evil communications corrupt good manners." She must not allow them to go after strange women (professed churches); she must teach them to beware of the flattering words of the strange woman (anti-christ), and thoroughly warn them against her subtle snares, and tell them plainly that her house is the way to hell, leading down to the chambers of death, lest they should let their heart decline to her ways; for she hath truly cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Such are her fascinating charms and seductive devices that many shall follow her pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. She must therefore faithfully warn them to beware of dogs, to beware of evil workers and to beware of the concision. She has a solemn charge to see that the discipline of the house of God is faithfully observed in all cases, and see that the little children love one another. She must in training them see that they are well instructed in all the doctrine of God their Savior, and that they perfectly understand and walk in all the order and ordinances of his house blamelessly and unrebukably until his coming.

Now, my dear sister, do you think a child of God, a son of the church, brought up strictly according to the laws of Christ and duly instructed to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded, from early infancy to old age, will, when old, depart from the doctrine, order or ordinances of his kingdom? Did you ever know such an instance? But even the children of God, who are left, like the few Jews in Jerusalem while the tribes were carried into Babylonish captivity, may forsake the law of the Lord, intermarry with the children of Ashdod, become corrupted, and their very language become confused and incoherent, so that they speak neither language correctly, but a mongrel jargon which betrays their lack of wholesome training. The children of God require the care and counsels of their mother, or they are liable to become as children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

In conclusion, esteemed sister, although you are located somewhat remote from your mother, as to the privileges or frequent social intercourse with the church, and but seldom can hear the preaching of the word in truth and faithfulness, yet as God has graciously trained you himself, weaned you from the vanities of the Gentiles, led you about and instructed you and kept you as the apple of his eye, surely there is no good thing that he will now withhold from you. Where you formerly sought a home, when you asked for bread they gave you a stone; when hunger compelled you to ask for a fish they gave you a serpent, and for an egg they gave you a scorpion. But the Lord heard your groaning and came down and delivered you; he brought you out of the house of bondage with a high hand and an outstretched arm, and he has brought you to his banqueting-house and over your defenseless head has he spread the banner of his love. Now we address to you the inspired admonition which has already been brought home

by the Spirit to your heart: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him."—Psalm 45:10, 11.

Middletown, N.Y., Oct. 15, 1865
Elder Gilbert Beebe

FIFTH SUNDAY MEETING
GREENSBORO PRIMITIVE
BAPTIST CHURCH

The Lord willing, a fifth Sunday meeting will be held at Greensboro Primitive Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C., Sunday, August 30, 1981, beginning at 10:30 A.M.

The meeting, though being held at Greensboro, will be participated in by a number of other independent churches.

An invitation is extended to ministers, brethren, and friends to meet with us.

Elder Kenneth Key, Pastor
Greensboro Church

SULPHUR FORK
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

The next session of the Sulphur Fork Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Fellowship Church, Friday and Saturday before the first Sunday in October, 1981. The church is located about 10 miles West of Longview, Texas off Highway 1844 and 1845.

All lovers of the truth are invited to come and worship with us.

Elder Loyd Wall, Moderator
Route 1, Bivins, Texas

Dear Sirs:

I find my subscription to the *Signs* expired with the March, 1981 issue.

Enclosed is a check to cover the renewal for two years. Use the rest to help print and distribute the *Signs*, or for whatever it may be needed.

I would like to express my appreciation to the staff for such a fine publication that holds true to the faith in these precarious days.

Also, I thank you for non interruption of my issues when I am late with my renewals as now.

Sincerely,
A Brother in Christ (I hope)
Hugh Knight, Jr.

O B I T U A R I E S

SISTER MINNIE SCOGGINS

Hopewell Church has seen another one of its precious members called from her earthly journey to be with her saviour.

Sister Scoggins was born July 12, 1892 and fell asleep in Jesus October 14, 1980. She was married June 20, 1909 to Ocie Lee Scoggins who preceded her in death. To this union were born one son, W. B. Scoggins of Crosby, Texas, two daughters, Mrs. Elner Taylor and Mrs. Nell Rose Freeman both of Quitman, Texas, and several grandchildren.

Sister Scoggins joined Hopewell Church in 1914 and was baptized by Elder H. B. Jones. She was a true and faithful member for sixty-six years. It is difficult to find words to accurately express the inward beauty of this dear sister. She was kind, warm, and affectionate to all. She loved going to church and hearing preaching of salvation by grace and grace alone. She never complained during her illness and always greeted me with a smile. Her hope of eternal salvation was very strong during her dying days, and she had a desire to depart this life to be with her Saviour.

Her funeral was conducted by the writer assisted by Brother Jimmy Hamrick. Her body was laid to sleep in the Hopewell Cemetery to await its resurrection call from Jesus.

Written by request of Hopewell Church while in conference. One copy to be sent to *Signs of the Times* for publication.

Her pastor,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick

LEON QUINN

In His infinite wisdom and mercy, God called to rest Brother Leon Quinn, a beloved member of Sand Hill Church. He passed away March 12, 1980.

Brother Quinn is survived by his wife, Dolly Edwards Quinn, two sons, and four daughters.

He was received into the fellowship of Sand Hill Church July 8, 1978, and was baptized by his Pastors, Elder Curtis Rains and Elder D. B. Stokes.

His funeral was conducted at Community Funeral Home in Beulaville, North Carolina, by Elder Curtis Rains. He was laid to rest in the East Duplin Cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We feel our loss is his gain.

Written by request of Sand Hill Church.

Brantley Kennedy, Clerk

SISTER LILLIE ATTAWAY

Hopewell Church has suffered the loss of another precious member.

Sister Lillie Attaway was born July 5, 1901 in Wood County, Texas to Henry Thomas and Lydia Licinda Wilson. She departed her earthly journey September 13, 1979, at the age of 79. She was married to William Burl Attaway, August 31, 1918. Two daughters were born to this union, Mrs. Bobbie Nell Brown, and Mrs. Betty Falk.

Sister Attaway joined Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church September 8, 1956, and remained a true and faithful member up to the time of her passing. She was regular in attendance and loved the doctrine of predestination, election, and free grace. We feel sure that our loss was her eternal gain. She bore the precious fruits of being a child of God. "Dark and Thorney is the Desert" was her favorite song.

Her survivors are her husband, two daughters, six grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. Her services were held at

Hopewell Church, and conducted by her pastor. She was laid to rest in Hopewell Cemetery under a mound of flowers and before many friends.

Written by request of Hopewell Church and by one who loved her.

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

PAUL WYATT

At the request of Sister Vergie Wyatt, wife of Brother Paul Wyatt, both members of North Fork Primitive Baptist Church, I submit the following obituary, having known and loved him for many years.

He was a faithful member and deacon, sincere in his faith, as well as a wonderful person.

He was accepted into North Fork Church August 8, 1954, and baptized Sept. 12, 1954, by Elder Hollingsworth.

He was ordained deacon April 7, 1956, by a presbytery consisting of Elder Randolph Perdue, Moderator, Elder P. E. Ingram, Clerk, and J. E. Burgess as spokesman for the Church.

Our Lord Jesus in His infinite mercy called our loved one home on November 15, 1980. He will be greatly missed by his Church and family.

His funeral was conducted by Elders R. S. Payne and J. R. Williams at Stones Funeral Home with burial in Rose Lawn Cemetery, Martinsville, Va., November 18, 1980.

Brother Paul was the son of the late Payton and Susie Adams Wyatt. He is survived by his wife, Sister Vergie Minter Wyatt; seven children, four daughters and three sons; one brother; one sister; ten grandchildren; and five great grandchildren.

Your little brother in hope,
Eddie Brown, Leatherwood Church

SISTER CARRIE E. WILLIAMS

It is with sorrow that we of the Robersonville Primitive Baptist Church submit this memorial of love and respect to our dear sister, Carrie E. Williams. The daughter of Laurence and Margaret Barnhill Everett, she was born March 1, 1893, and passed away August 23, 1980, after an extended illness.

She is survived by three sons; Russell, J. L. & William E. Williams, one brother, Reuben Everett, all of Robersonville, N. C.

Having united with the church in her early twenties, she remained a faithful member and a firm believer in the doctrine of salvation by grace, always ready to help with her share of the church along with her husband, Joseph J. Williams, who served as a deacon for many years. She will be sadly missed by her church, which extends deepest sympathy to her family.

The funeral was conducted at the Robersonville Primitive Baptist Church by Elder Joseph Leggett, Elder Reeves Smith, and Mr. Don McMurray, after which she was laid to rest beside her husband in the Robersonville Cemetery.

Written by request of the church.

Magalene E. Brown

SISTER MYRTLE HUMPHREY

In my weak way, if God will bless me, I will try and write a few lines about our beloved sister; knowing that God does all things well both in heaven and earth.

She was the daughter of Ned and Alice Morton. Myrtle was born November 14, 1914. She lived in Onslow County all of her life. She died November 12, 1980, making her stay on earth sixty-six years lacking two days.

She was married once and to their union was blessed with two children, one boy, one girl, and five grandchildren.

The Lord saw fit to bring her to the church April 28, 1961. She was always a good and faithful member when she was able to be there. She was sick for three years and was stricken to bed for the last six months she lived. She never complained and was always glad to see the Brethren and Sisters and friends visit with her and talk about God's mercy. She was a good wife and mother. We believe she is a mother in Israel; gone to be with God where there is no sickness, sorrow, or pain, or death where all is joy, love, and peace forevermore.

Myrtle was blessed with a wonderful husband. He did everything he could do for her in her sickness. He stood by her to the end with God's help.

She was always blessed to practice the doctrine of our Lord and Savior. She was loved by everyone far and near. We miss her,

but we believe that her absence from her family and friends and loved ones is her eternal gain.

Now, to the family, husband and children press on, keep the good faith. Press on to the high calling. I know that you have a vacant place in your home as well as in your hearts. I hope the good Lord will reconcile all of you to your great loss and be a mother to you all.

Done by order of Northeast Church in conference the third Saturday in November 1980.

Written by an unprofitable sinner living in hope of eternal rest in our Lord and Savior.

Sister Effie Morton

Route 2 Box 68

Jacksonville, North Carolina 28540

BERTHA SLONE TROUP

In loving memory of my dear Aunt, Bertha Slone Troup. She was born in Franklin County, Ferrum, Virginia, June 10, 1887, and fell asleep in Jesus the night of September 10, 1980, making her stay on earth 93 years and 3 months. She was the daughter of James Y. and Eliza Hale Slone.

She was married to Tyree M. Troup, November 26, 1908, which made their wedded life together almost 72 years. She was a devoted wife, a good neighbor, and loved by all who knew her.

She united with Pigg River Primitive Baptist Church the 4th Sunday in August, 1947, and was baptized by her pastor at that time, Elder J. P. Helms.

She is survived by her husband, Tyree M. Troup and several nieces and nephews. She was just like a mother to all of us that she came in contact with, especially to me, always wanting to serve rather than be served. We all loved her and miss her, but we feel she is at rest with her Lord and try to be reconciled to Him who doeth all things according to His will. Much could be said about her but all that knew her know what a kind, loving person she was.

Her funeral was conducted by her Pastor, Elder W. M. Holland at Oakey's Chapel, Salem, Virginia. She was laid to rest in Sherwood Memorial Park, on September 12, 1980.

Submitted by her niece,
Jessie Via Minnix

Signs of the Times

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 10/81
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

**THE EARLY RELIGIOUS LIFE OF
ELDER DAVID BARTLEY,
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL
(CONTINUED)**

Elder McQueary came to see us soon, and he arranged to take me with him in his carriage to the Fayette church the first Saturday in June to attend the ordination of four ministers—brethren Wright, Millspaugh, Carter, and Conner. At that wonderful meeting I again met the eminent Elders Wilson Thompson, Benjamin Jones, and others, my father's companions in the gospel, whom I had known in my boyhood. The meeting was large and was held in a pleasant grove or woodland. One after another the young preachers were called to go upon the platform and relate their religious experience, ministerial call, and views of the doctrine of the gospel. In doing so Brother Millspaugh (long since called to his blessed reward), who was the third speaker, said that he had been much perplexed about faith, as in some sense a condition, or having saving merit; and, notwithstanding the brethren had labored to get him to see it more clearly, as the gift of God and a fruit of the Spirit, and as embracing Christ as our only righteousness and salvation, in whom faith found all its merit and glory; yet, so dull was his mind and hard his heart, he had told them that, unless it pleased the Lord to open it to his understanding, he could not see it as they did. When he said this I at once felt that he had expressed the state of my own relative to the mysterious union between Christ and the Church about which Elder

McQueary had talked much to me since we had been together. I not only had no understanding of it, but no special interest in it; but now my mind was so impressed with the earnest desire to understand this sacred union that I could not think of anything else and my heart was burdened with the unspoken prayer that the Lord might show it to me. While the last of the four, Brother Harvey Wright, talked to us, it was given me to see this blessed union between the heavenly Bridegroom and His bride—Jesus the Holy Head and the church His redeemed and sanctified body. My spirit now rejoiced in this enrapturing covenant-union, which had its rise in the everlasting love of God, and the dear Redeemer was more precious to me than ever.

The large Council of Elders and Deacons soon withdrew some distance, leaving a large congregation at the stand. My soul was so filled with the precious name of Jesus and my heart so burned with love to Him that I wondered why some one was not left at the stand to talk to us of Him; and it was with difficulty that I resisted the strong impression to go upon the stand and talk to them of the preciousness and glory of the beloved Son of God as our Savior; but as I was not a member of the church and a youthful stranger I thought it would not do to yield, and fearing to trust myself there, I walked away and sat down on a log, my heart feeling as if it would almost burst with its pent up emotions. Presently a still voice in my soul said: "Go, preach Jesus and His righteousness". This word was with such power that I could no longer remain silent, so I arose and went up a little valley, behind a hill, where I praised the Lord aloud, and the green trees and blue skies seemed to help me praise Him.

At sunrise the next morning I walked down to the river (Whitewater) at Brother Millspaugh's, and stood in sweet awe beholding the beauties and

wonders of nature, when the words of Paul came into my soul with power: "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ".

CHAPTER VII

ADDED TO THE CHURCH

The second Saturday in June, 1854, I was gathered with the Conn's Creek Regular Baptist church in a full meeting house. When Elder McQueary arose in the pulpit to preach, old Mr. Jacob Creek stood on the floor just in front of him, because he was hard of hearing, and while the minister preached the gospel in power the tears flowed from the aged man's eyes, the eloquent witnesses of his faith in Jesus and His power to save. He had been a near neighbor to us in my boyhood, an honest farmer, believing in conditional salvation. However, disliking the ways in the Methodist class he quit them, then went to hear my father preach for a time, but quit going. Not long after he came to our house one noontime, while we sat in the shade resting from the farm-work, and said to father: "Mr. Bartley, you know that I went to hear you preach for some time, but have quit going". "Yes", said father. "Well, I have come to tell you why I don't go to hear you any more, for I feared you might think it was because I have something against you as a neighbor, but I have not, for I like you as a neighbor and respect you." Father said: "No, I did not think so, Mr. Creek, for we have always been good neighbors". He then said, "The fact is, Mr. Bartley, your preaching does sap my foundation, and that is the reason why I do not go to hear you preach any more". At that time I was a light-hearted boy and felt no interest in gospel preaching, which this neighbor thought was against him and cut him off from his foundation. My father was now called home, and after many years I thus met his old neighbor again; but oh how changed we both

were! For now we both stood on Christ, the sure foundation, and rejoiced together in the same glad tidings of salvation that my father had faithfully preached.

After the sermon it was my long-wished-for privilege to stand in front of the pulpit and freely tell the church of all the way I had been led since that Sunday in November, 1844, when it was shown me that I was not built on Christ, until the present happy day, and how my heart was drawn to them in love. My tears flowed while I talked, and I think all in the house were in tears, but they were tears of comfort. When I sat down a dear sister told the church her experience of saving grace; then we were both gladly and warmly received into the congregation of the Lord, to be baptized the next day. With my folks and others I went to Brother McQueary's for the night; and before I sat down to the sumptuous dinner my soul was overwhelmed in darkness, doubts, and fears, for the first time since that blessed revelation of Jesus to me in the upper room in Cincinnati, and I could not eat. I asked dear old Brother Caudell, a beloved companion of my father and a pillar in the church, to walk out with me, and we sat on the grass in the shade of a tree while I told him how greatly I feared that I had been deceived, and deceived the church; therefore I entreated him to lay my case before the church on Sunday and ask it to release me, because I was not fit or worthy to be baptized. I said that if I had such an experience as Sister Harlow told the church that day I would feel satisfied. He tried to relieve me, but my case seemed to become worse, and I felt that my situation was desperate, for he refused to submit my case to the church for reconsideration, assuring me that they were all satisfied and felt that I had done only my duty. We both wept and talked, but my deep gloom and trouble remained. On Sunday the congregation was large and the preaching was with

power, but for me there was no comfort, for my darkness was fearful, and I wondered why I had been so presumptuous as to offer myself to the church—a step which I had no power to undo. When the people all started to the river, a half-mile northward, I fell behind, turned aside and knelt behind a tree, entreating the Lord to show me what He would have me to do, and not suffer me to dishonor Him, but received no relief. Oh! I felt that this was the worst thing I had ever done, for it would be an unpardonable sin and an awful mockery for me to be baptized, feeling that I had no evidence of the Lord's approval, or that I was a proper subject, and I feared that I should feel condemned forever after. But, alas! it was too late—there was no help for me and I must submit—like one going to his execution. Having asked Elder McQueary some days before to sing at the river—

“Jesus, and shall it ever be,

A mortal man ashamed of Thee”.

I arrived too late to hear this touching hymn, and he was praying. I stood trembling and my spirit fervently asked the Lord to give me the evidence in my baptism, if, indeed, it was well-pleasing to Him. The venerable minister led me out quite a distance in the beautiful river (Flatrock), then softly laid me under the water in this solemn burial. That moment all darkness, doubt and fear fled! Heavenly light and peace filled my soul, and it was the most blessed place I had ever been in! It was where Jesus Himself was laid, and when He arose heaven was opened unto Him! It was even so with me, for my whole being was full of divine light, love and gladness, and never had I known such perfect happiness as was mine when I walked up out of the water. The company of saints, too, looked so lovely and happy and the glory of God shone upon us all. I now beheld such an infinite fullness of salvation in the most blessed and lovely Savior that I wanted to speak forth His praises aloud, and could scarcely hold my

peace, but as the sister was to be baptized, I did. O, sacred, blessed baptism! Divine emblem of the resurrection of the holy Son of God and of all the redeemed children of God!

Dear Brother Caudell went with me to assist in changing my clothing, and as we went he said: "Brother David, didn't you feel happy as you came up out of the water?" I answered: "Yes, Brother Caudell, very happy". He rejoined, "I thought so, for I never saw as happy a look as there was on your face. Didn't you feel like talking?" "Yes, Brother Caudell, I could hardly keep from talking". "I thought so", he gladly responded. Having witnessed my awful gloom and distress, he now rejoiced with me in my happiness in the Lord. Surely this was a sweet foretaste of the bright resurrection-glory and the joy of heaven, when death shall be swallowed up in victory.

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS MY DUTY?

Now my troubles, conflicts and unrest seemed to be at an end, and as we rode home to my sister's my peace was perfect; but when nearly there a still voice within me said, "Now you are in the church, what is your duty; for every one has a place to fill, and what is your place?" This checked my restful peace; but I quickly resolved that as soon as I entered the house I would take up the Bible, close my eyes, and ask the Lord to direct me to a Scripture that would show me the place He designed me to fill in the church. But it opened between the Old Testament and the New, and I felt rebuked, for an inward voice said, "See how forward and presumptuous you are in thinking the Lord had anything for you to do!" Yet I was impressed with a desire to know the Lord's will; so I turned to the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and read it, and on the fifth, yearning for something to relieve and comfort me; but nothing had any interest for me until I read verse 20: "Go,

stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life". I could read no farther, nor take my eyes from these words of solemn command, but read them over and over, for it seemed that they were spoken to me, and they deeply affected me. Closing the book, I left the house and walked the yard, mentally saying, "This was spoken by the angel of the Lord to the apostle Peter and John, not to you, and why should you be so exercised about it?" But I could not prevent the angelic words from reverberating with power through the chambers of my soul: "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life". This was the beginning of a new experience and trial, and it came upon me so unlooked for; for I had expected to find the dear church a home of tranquility, peace and rest of soul. Oh! little did I know of the way!

The next day I walked on an errand beyond Brother McQueary's and called to see him on the way and while there a rain set in. He took advantage of this and asked me if I was not exercised about speaking in the name of the Lord. I tried to evade an answer, but he told me that as I was now a member of the church he had a right to ask me and said it was my duty to tell him, either yes or no. So I finally told him of my exercises on the day of the ordination and the day of my baptism. As I returned from the errand, again I called in to see him, asked him to walk out with me and entreated him with tears to say nothing of what he had asked me to tell him, but he said he could make no rash promise and tried to comfort me. Supper being ready, he said, "Brother Bartley, ask a blessing", I tried to do so, but the effort spoiled my appetite, for I felt that he and the rest were ashamed of me as I was of myself! As soon as I was on my way the tempter said to me: "Now look at yourself! You think about preaching and you can't ask a blessing without feeling ashamed of it". As I plodded along darkness soon set in, but the

darkness within was greater and I was very wretched. For on the way home the conviction took possession of my mind that the church would give me license to preach at the next meeting, but my feeling was that I could not submit to this. That night I slept but little. The next two days my conflict and trouble seemed greater than I had ever endured, and I felt that I could scarcely live without relief. I wandered about day and night--tried to search the Scriptures--piteously tried to implore the Lord for relief and release, but cries were shut out, because my spirit was rebellious against the will of the Lord and the church. For while I fully believed the church would license me to preach the gospel at the next conference meeting, my mind was that, rather than submit I would prefer exclusion; therefore I implored the Lord to release me from such an ordeal, relieve me from my crushing trouble and give me peace again. For not only did I feel utterly unfit and insufficient for the gospel ministry, but I also greatly desired to be a successful physician. During this fearful mental conflict I vowed that I would die before I would try to preach, but instantly a silent voice within said: "You shall have to suffer in this body for preaching this doctrine".

On Wednesday afternoon, while lying under a shade tree in the yard, my wife sat down by me and asked me what was the matter. I told her that the church would license me to preach at the next meeting, and I felt as if it would almost kill me. She tried to relieve my distressed mind by assuring me that the church would not do so premature a thing, but I told her it would, and asked her if she thought I could preach. She said, "No, I don't". At this I wept aloud, for I could no longer control the storm of conflicting emotions, yet I felt that she was right, and that I could not preach. But why, then, must I be so troubled about preaching?

That night I went from place to place, first in the orchard, then away in the

woods, seeking access to the Lord in prayer, and fearing some one might hear me, but no relief could I find, for my prayers were shut out. The trouble was, I wanted relief in my own way, and my stubborn will would not yield. At last, almost exhausted, I came to an inviting log and sat down to rest. Just then a new train of thought and feeling possessed me, and my unyielding will gave way to a meek spirit of peace and child-like trust, and the fierce struggle ceased! The dear Master so gently gave me to see that the church was His and that my rebellion against it was against Him. Now I was overcome in sweet contrition, and every thought was brought into obedience unto Christ. I then felt a true spirit of prayer, and, kneeling, realized blessed access in the presence of the Lord, for He was very near and precious. In implicit trust I asked Him to bless the church with His mind and wisdom, guide it to do that which would honor and please Him, and give me grace and strength to obediently do His will. It was now late in the night, and my natural strength was nearly exhausted, but I went home so changed and peaceful, retired and slept, and my sleep was as when Jacob said, "The Lord is in this place!" For in a heavenly vision the lovely Savior stood over me in heavenly radiance, and in a moment we were standing before the congregation at the church. He stood at my right hand, placed the open New Testament in my hands, and enabled me to minister to the comfort of His people. While I spoke their faces expressed sympathy, gladness and love. He then gave me to understand that thus it should be and I should go and preach the gospel of salvation; that while I should meet with trials, He would be with me and put it into the hearts of His people to sympathize with and encourage me. That the Lord Jesus gave me this true vision I have had abundant assurance through my ministry for forty-two years.

At the next church-meeting, the second Saturday in July, 1854, the church voted that I should relate my exercises about speaking in the name of the Lord, and the pastor called me forward. I complied, but sat down and wept. Then, with some composure, I related what I have here written. Dear old Elder Nay was present, and on being asked for counsel, said he could witness to what I had related, and that he believed the Lord had called me to preach the gospel. Elder McQueary asked me one question: "Brother Bartley, have you ever seen anything in yourself that looked like a preacher or made you think you could preach?" The answer was in my heart and I said, "No, Brother McQueary, unless the Lord enables me, I know I cannot preach". With a smile he replied: "Well, Brother Bartley, we Old Baptists are a strange sort of people, for if we have a man among us that thinks he can preach and must preach, we will not let him preach; but if we have one who feels the he can't preach, we will make him preach". The church then liberated me to preach the gospel wherever God in His providence might cast my lot.

At the close of the Sunday meeting the pastor said: "Brethren Bartley and Jackson, two young preachers, will preach here next Sunday at 4 o'clock." This was a great shock to me, for no one had spoken to me about it and it troubled me all the week. But as Brother Jackson had been speaking in the church a few months I consoled myself with the thought that I should refuse, and he would speak to the people. At eleven the next Sunday we all went to hear Brother McQueary preach at a meeting house near us, and some of the brethren went home with us for dinner. To my dismay they told me Brother Jackson had gone on a visit to another church. At first I felt that I could not go to the appointment, but they kindly urged me, saying that it would hurt Brother McQueary's feelings if I refused, yet

they expressed much sympathy for me. At last they got me started, but we arrived an hour late, and then I went away and tried to pray before going in the well-filled house. Brother McQueary told me to go in the pulpit as the people were waiting. I begged him to preach and let me off, but he refused. Taking me up with him he handed me the Bible and told me to select a text while he introduced for me. He was a man of God, full of earnest and deep feeling, though stern, and he fervently prayed for me. Then I arose and read: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away". Isa. 35:10. This text, so full of the gospel, had been in my mind all the week, and my thought was that if I had to speak to the congregation I might say something upon it in an experimental way, for its meaning seemed very clear.

First, I stated that the appointment was made without my knowledge; that I feared it was not the Lord, but fleshly and wrong; that if it was not according to His will for me to speak in His name my desire was that He might seal my lips and not suffer me to dishonor His holy name before them; but, if it was His will, I believed He could enable even me to speak in His praise.

Turning to the subject to begin, I again read, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return", and was about to tell the meaning of "ransomed", when, as quick as one can put out a light, my mind was in awful darkness, and I could not utter a word, but stood dumb and confounded before all! Horror and shame overwhelmed me, for I felt that the Lord had rebuked me before them, according to my word. Oh, why had I thus presumptuously gone into that sacred place, and made myself such a fearful example and warning? I felt that death would have been preferable to

this, and the intensity of my dismay was so crushing it seemed that I must fall, unless I sat down, for it appeared a long time that I had stood there in that mute agony, knowing that all eyes were upon me, beholding how the Lord had condemned me before them. I turned my head over my shoulder, to see the seat and drop back on it--when lo! the horror of darkness fled, and the Sun of righteousness arose unto me with healing in His wings. In an instant all was light and peace in my soul, my thoughts were liberated, my tongue was loosened, and I was enabled to speak about an hour upon the text with freedom and comfort. And as I entered into the divine meaning and blessedness of my text, tears filled the eyes of the brethren, expressive of their relief and comfort of heart, for they had seen my distress, and had felt and prayed for me, as the pastor told me. When I sat down, it was with the quiet peace of a comforted child, and a trusting faith that the Lord was with me.

Looking back through my extended ministerial life and travels and labors, from now until that first sermon, I may truly say that it was a faithful earnest and pattern of all the way in which the Lord has led me, in fulfillment of the heavenly vision He gave me. For in waiting on my ministering, in a large measure light had been sown to me in darkness, and in me the words of the Lord Jesus have been fulfilled: "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light". This has had the effect to teach me my entire insufficiency for so great a work and to abase me before the Most High, that I might have an humble spirit. Indeed, from the time I knew the altogether lovely One as my Savior I have earnestly desired to be meek and lowly in heart as He is, and He has given me this desire through many afflictions and trials, which have bowed my spirit in deep sorrow and caused me to cry unto the Lord for grace to help me in

time of need.

(continued next month)

PLEASANT VALLEY ASSOCIATION

The thirty-fifth annual session of the Pleasant Valley Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Shepherd Fold Church of Primitive Predestinarian Baptist Faith and Order, 815 Little York Road, Houston, Texas 77076, commencing on Friday before, and continuing through the first Sunday in November, 1981 (October 30 and 31 and November 1).

Elder C. M. Haygood, Pastor
(Called Feb., 1962)

Sister Robbie Nell Holloway, Clerk
Phone (713) 453-8846

BUTTAHATCHIE OLD SCHOOL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The 156th session of the Buttahatchie Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Macedonia Church, Sulligent, Alabama, on October 9, 10, and 11. The church is located off Highway 278 just west of Sulligent, Alabama.

We wish to invite all of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ to come and be with us at this time.

James McCool
Route 1, Box 96A
Cedar Bluff, Miss. 39741
Phone (601) 328-0532

KEHUKKEE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION 1981

The Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association for the year of 1981 will be held at William Primitive Baptist Church in Edgecombe County the first Sunday in October, Saturday before and Monday following. (October 3, 4, 5)

William Primitive Baptist Church is located on Secondary Road No. 1428, three tenths of a mile west of Highway No. N.C. 44. Those coming from the north traveling I-95 come to Weldon, N.C., then take U.S. 301 South passing Enfield, N.C., to Whitakers, N.C. to intersection of U.S. 301 and N.C. No. 44, turn left on N.C. 44 (east), go 11.8 miles to

secondary road No. 1428 on right, turn right three-tenths miles to church on right side.

Those coming from the *south* and *east* go to Tarboro, N.C., take N.C. 44 out of Tarboro north to Leggett. Continue on N.C. 44, 1.9 miles to Secondary Road No. 1428, turn left and go 3 tenths mile to church on right.

Those coming from the *southwest* travel I 95 to Rocky Mount, N.C. to intersection of I 95 and N.C. 97. Turn right on N.C. 97 (east) go to Leggett, N.C. to intersection of N.C. 97 and N.C. 44. Turn left on N.C. 44, go 1.9 miles to secondary road No. 1428, turn left and go 3 tenths miles to church on right.

Those coming from the *west* come to Rocky Mount, N.C. In Rocky Mount get on N.C. 97 east and go to Leggett to intersection of N.C. 97 and N.C. 44, turn left on N.C. 44 and go 1.9 miles to secondary road No. 1428. Turn left on secondary road No. 1428 and go 3 tenths miles to church on right.

We extend an invitation to Old School Primitive Baptists who are in peace and order at home and abroad and all the dear friends to come and visit us at our two hundred sixteenth session of the Old Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association.

In bonds and afflictions,
Marvin E. Garner, Clerk

BOOKS WANTED

Elder W. D. Griffin, Route 6, Box 84, Fayette, Alabama, 35555, desires to obtain the following two books:

Fulton Council Meeting (Date-About 1901)
Fort Worth Council Proceedings

Anyone having information on these books will please contact Elder Griffin directly. He is willing to pay a reasonable price for either or both.

Thank you,
Editor

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.
TO JUNE, 1981

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Quitman, Mississippi

Dear Elder Poole,

I trust this finds you abounding in the riches of His sovereign grace and mercy, and hopeful that our God will graciously preserve us both in all His path of righteousness.

Elder Poole, it is an amazing thing here to see something I have longed to see, yet barely able even to hope for. Yet, in the past four or five months, most of the churches are in a spiritual awakening which to date continues to increase. Their spiritual state is refreshing, the Scriptures are being read with greater intensity; discussions are taking on a good degree of interest and depth, and greater numbers of visitors are attending regularly with increasing interest and love. Two churches in the Little Zion are not yet affected in this way, yet all across the southern tier of states, this appears very general.

I saw your remarks in the *Signs*, which echo, surely, the desires of all true spiritual Israelites. I think you know of our meager efforts to pull down the bars

of fellowship a few years ago. We put a great deal of work into it, and it accomplished nothing that I could detect. Yet, in recent months, as this outflowing of love, peace, and spiritual revival increased, churches separated by issues long since forgotten or invalid have quietly laid aside these troublesome bars on a sweet and peaceful manner. The beauty of it is that there was no attempted work to do this; it just came to pass. I am convinced that the Lord did the work, for I know of no man who attempted it nor any who could have successfully achieved it had they tried.

Perhaps in some areas, and in many times past, little men have attempted to rule a great people...and the end results have been as any enlightened soul could expect. Yet, when the Great and Sovereign God brings to pass His eternal decree, none can rule with such excellent wisdom and almighty power. It must be...yes, it has to be...by an internal work generally applied by the Holy Spirit within the hearts of His precious elect. Carnality, with the greatest and highest motives and most basic Spiritual foundations, cannot lay the hands of a Uzzah upon it to steady His ship-of-state with any more approval than that Uzzah of old when the Ark was transferred from Nachon's threshingfloor to that of Obedom! (II Samuel 6:6-11)

As Gospel Ministers, if so be that we are, we must ever set before God's people the way of peace. And when we are given to see the fruits of the tares of tradition as an unwarranted hindrance, we can only cry aloud. Yet, if the Lord does not keep the city, the watchman waketh in vain and the cry is upon deaf ears and eyes with narrow vision.

I suppose a maxim to go by for His ministers is: walk in an upright manner before His people as examples to the flock. Let others war, but let us not be found with a sword. Let others revile, but let us hold our peace; let others play

their politics, but let us ever remember that Christ is the great Head of His Church.

My motive for writing in answer to your request for comments from the *Signs* readers, I sincerely hope, is without vain glory on either your's or my account. When I was baptized by an Old School Baptist Elder in 1962, he gave me the *Signs* dating from 1957, and said: "Read and study these. They are our people, and the greatest of our Elders have contributed to its pages". In following years, I have given gift subscriptions to more people than I can now recall. We've not always agreed, of course, for we have no legitimate Pope! (Other than Christ, of course). The point I make is this: In many issues in the past I've often seen appeals for peace and unity. While you brethren may not have seen any immediate results, yet that has ever been set before me as a "part and partial" of Old School Baptists order. I honestly believe that it is the heart-desire of every twice born soul; for those that are begotten of God loveth His precious children - their kinsmen in Christ. Collectively, they are the family of God; and they all desire that great "home-coming" when they shall once and forever more be united together in Him and with Him in glory. That being a basis of their hope, it seems to me that it just must be their desire here, as well.

I indeed desire it, but I have no desire left to work at it. The Predestinarian Old School Baptists in Mississippi voted by unanimous consent in 1975 to declare they had no bars of fellowship against anyone; and that sound, orderly, and peaceful Elders were free to go in and out among us provided they leave their troubles at home. There has been no mention to this date by any of the members or churches to decide otherwise. We do not claim to have wisdom enough to foresee the future if this be good or ill, but it has been thus far to the advancement of the cause of God and truth as we can understand

such in our limitations.

In all things that redound to the glory of God and our blessed Redeemer, I bid you God-Speed.

Yours in Hope by free grace only,
Stanley C. Phillips

(In the June, 1981, issue of the *Signs of the Times* we asked to hear the views of others regarding bars of fellowship. This letter from Elder Phillips is in response to that request. J.F.P.)

Saltillo, Texas

Dear Elder Williams,

Sister Willie (Green) Smith, daughter of the late Elder W. N. Green, has composed a 60 page booklet of her father's experience and writings on various subjects. She has had 500 copies made and would like to sell them for \$2.00 a copy to offset some of the expense.

Would you please print a notice in the *Signs* for her.

Elder Green stood among our able ministers for almost 35 years during the period from 1915 to 1949. I personally knew him. He had a most wonderful personality and the most vital part, an able gift and Godly life. He was a subscriber to the *Signs* throughout his ministry. He lived through a controversial period concerning the sovereignty of God. He preached along this line much of the time.

Also, I notice our subscription expired last month, so I am enclosing a check for two years renewal.

We are looking forward to meeting you at the Fifth Sunday meeting at Hopewell.

Yours in Gospel Bonds,
Elder C. M. Haygood.

P.S. Those desiring a copy of the booklet on Elder Green's writings can contact:

Brother Bob Champeau

803 W. Brooks

Norman, Oklahoma 73069

I CORINTHIANS 9:14

Elder Beebe: Please give your views on I. Cor. 9:14: "*Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel*". I want your views particularly on the ordination of God relative to the Lord's preachers living by the gospel. I presume you believe that what God has ordained comes to pass; if so, why is it that the Old School Baptist preachers generally get little or nothing of a temporal support? Are they not called to preach? Or does the ordination of God fail? By attending to the above request you will much oblige an inquirer after truth.

Isom Cranfill

REPLY

The word "ordain", like many other words in our vocabulary, is used to express more than one idea. Sometimes it is used in the Scriptures to express the determined counsel or decree of God, as in Eph. 2:10. Sometimes it is applied to the setting apart of elders, pastors or apostles to the work whereunto the Holy Ghost has called them, etc; but in the text under consideration, it is, as we understand it, intended to signify that the Lord had instituted or commanded that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel, just as he ordained, instituted or commanded in the ceremonial law, that they which minister about holy things, should live of the things of the temple, and they which waited at the altar should be partakers with the altars. Even so has he given commandment concerning his gospel ministers, who devote themselves to that work, that they shall be sustained by the brethren. They sow to the brethren spiritual things, and receive from them of their carnal things.

But like all the other commands of Christ, this is sometimes disobeyed, and for this very reason the apostle admonished the church in regard to it. In as much as Christ our King has ordained or enacted this as a law or precept, and made it binding, it should

be solemnly regarded by all his loyal subjects.

We certainly believe that the firm decrees of the throne of God shall all be fulfilled. What he predestinates must surely come to pass. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And Christ was ordained before the foundation of the world as a Lamb slain for them who, by him, do believe in God, etc. But when the word is used in reference to his laws and ordinances in the church, it does not express what he has promised himself to accomplish, but what he has enjoined on his saints to do in obedience to his commands.

We certainly believe that Old School Baptist preachers are called to preach, for they are the only class of preachers under heaven that we know anything about who do preach the gospel of Christ, but why they, or any of them, fail to receive an adequate support, would be as difficult for us as for brother Cranfill to tell. In some instances it may be that they are located among brethren that are poor, and unable to be as liberal as they wish, and in some cases it may result from a reprehensible negligence, or disregard for the laws of Christ.

But it is possible that the ministers themselves are in fault. When Jesus sent out the seventy as lambs among wolves, he allowed them not to take purse or scrip with them. They were to rest solely on the indemnity of his name, and leave the whole matter of their support to him, and they returned, and reported that they had lacked nothing. Christ's ministers are still required to go in his name, and to rely on his power and providence to sustain them, and if in doing so they lack anything, let them report the matter to him.

Some of our preachers have in protesting against making a trade of divinity, or merchandise of the gospel, been understood to hold that it is wrong for ministers to be supported by the liberality of the saints, and to denounce those who are so sustained, as hirelings.

Others have, by an overreaching greediness of filthy lucre, by storming, scolding, fretting and complaining of the meanness and covetousness of their brethren, disheartened them. *The most liberal hearted christians are, probably, as a general thing, those who are the best fed.* But there can be no reasonable doubt that too little regard is paid to the authority of Christ by the churches in regard to the obligation laid on them to communicate to the support of those who labor in word and doctrine among them.

Middletown, N.Y.

September 1, 1859

Dear Elder Poole,

I am writing I hope for the sake of peace among our people. I will start with Romans 16:17. "Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple". The doctrine of God will not separate the sheep, where ever the gospel is preached, there will be a drawing together of believers to feast on the word that is preached, but at the same time it will drive away the goats. The doctrine of God is preached in peace, which is glad tidings to the poor. "Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them."

This kind of divisions and offences comes about by those that have not the love of God in their hearts, and they don't care how much it hurts, they are self-willed and stubborn seeking to fulfill the lust of their own fleshly desire. The doctrine will bring about divisions in separating believers from unbelievers.

"Suppose ye that I am come to give

peace on earth? I tell you, Nay but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. If God gives three eternal life, these three will be divided against two, and the two will be divided against the three. Many of our people are simple, not looking for the fruit of love. They say, "Well, he sure did preach well", and not comparing the speech with the walk. "Blessed are they that do know the joyful sound, for they shall walk in the light of the countenance of God". The walking in the light of the countenance is just as certain as that he knows the joyful sound. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is to see the brethren dwell together in unity".

Let us look at what Paul tells us. "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for example. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things. For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself". Phil. 3:17-21.

I am weeping on the inside, praying for unity among our brethren. If I could shed tears I might get along better than I do. I desire the prayers of all the saints. I do not have an ill will against any of my brethren, but the way some are disturbing the peace I cannot want to be with them, yet I am willing to overlook all that they do, if they turn for peace.

Elder J. R. Hollandsworth

310 Wood St.

Winston Salem, N.C. 27107

Dear Brother Spangler,

Some time back I received a reply from

you from a previous letter I had written to you. I certainly enjoy reading the *Signs* each month. This paper is about all the contact I have with Old School Baptists around here. There are a number of the "Conditional" churches in the area, of which I do not attend. One of their Elders came for a visit but when he found out I believe absolute predestination of all things I have not seen nor heard from him since. Brother, I do not believe in the way that the conditionals say we do. I believe Gilbert Beebe very clearly set forth this truth in its Biblical perspective in his editorial of October 1, 1880, *Signs*, "Absolute Predestination of all Things".

I know who the author of conditional heresy is. None of the old English Strict Baptists ever heard of it. I thought (until a few years back) that all Baptist people who believed in sovereign Grace believed also in absolute predestination of all things. Well, around these parts I am troubled on the one hand with the conditionals and on the other hand with the New School Missionaries. I belong to neither, have no desire to, and am marked by both as being "A Hardshell Heretic". I do not believe that because one believes in the absolute predestination of all things that it causes one to live in open sin. Some may use it as a license but such characters wouldn't need a license anyway. Neither can I, nor do I, charge God with sin. I am responsible for my sin and we "Absoluters" have been charged with this accusation.

As I mentioned in a previous letter, I am not officially connected with the Old School Baptist. I am along the Old English Strict and Particular Baptist lines. I do not believe in offers of grace. I believe regeneration is a direct work of the Holy Spirit, enabling the one quickened to receive the written word. I do not believe in Mission societies, nor Sunday School, or instrumental music, nor a paid (set salary) ministry. People find me more Old School Baptist than

any other kind. I am not ashamed of it, either. I cannot bend so as to get fellowship, esteem, etc. I do not know of a meeting near, though I can attend, I do not drive.

I have thought for awhile about trying to move somewhere near the coast of N.C. or Virginia. Don't care for a large town, but from 2-5,000 population is o.k.

Do you know any brethren of like persuasion around New Bern, Washington, Belhaven, Edenton, Morehead City, Beauford, Elizabeth City, Hertford, or Swansboro, North Carolina? Perhaps you would know someone on the *Signs* mailing list from these places. One reason for wanting to move near the coast is that I have a keen interest in boatbuilding and would like to be near at least a large river or sound. And I would want to be able to also be near brethren I could fellowship with.

I went and preached quite regularly in a Sovereign Grace meeting north of town here in 1978. Well, I did not go along with their Sunday School, their musical instruments and clearly denounced it. Needless to say, I was not called upon any more. Also, one night the Lord opened me up and the discourse lasted an hour and 20 minutes. Well, the pastor found great fault with that. He remarked, "You can't hold people for over 30 minutes". In other words, charm them for 30 minutes and they get tired if you go over that and leave off the charming. Such philosophy belongs to the Hindu cobra snake charmer.

Well brother, I suppose I have wearied you. I would also be interested to know if you know anyone in this city here I could contact.

I shall look forward to hearing from you. I am 40 years of age, disabled, and have a dear wife and 14 year old daughter.

Augustus Webb

original, is the same as that, in other places, translated ark and coffin. There are five of these mentioned in the Old Testament. 1st, Noah's ark, denoting salvation. 2nd, The ark of bulrushes in which Moses, when a babe, was laid, denoting preparation. 3rd, The coffin in which Joseph was laid, denoting sanctification or separation, 4th, The ark of the covenant, over which was the mercy seat, denoting acceptance and 5th, The chest in which were placed the offerings of the people, denoting dedication.

It was no accident that these five different arks appeared in their order, for salvation is first in the experience of the believer and the things which accompany salvation follow in their order. Noah's ark was ordained for the salvation of those whom God chose. The Lord shut them in this ark of salvation, they did not shut themselves in. There was but one window, which was in the top. Here we see God's mercy in sparing Noah the sight of the destruction around him; also, to see the light, Noah had to look up. What a mercy in times of stress to be enabled to look away from all that distresses us, all the turmoil around us, and to look up by faith to Jesus. The second ark, in which Moses was laid, was at a time in the history of the Israelites when they were oppressed by the Egyptians. The Hebrews were multiplying so, that the Pharaoh, which knew not Joseph, feared they would revolt. To prevent this, he ordered all male babies to be destroyed. Moses' mother hid her child until he could no longer be hidden, then she made this ark of bulrushes, put her child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. Pharaoh's daughter, coming to bathe, took the child and he was brought up in Pharaoh's house, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, where he was educated as a prince. Here was an opportunity for Moses to be a great man in the world, but Moses, by faith, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's

daughter, recognized his own people, and chose rather to suffer with them. The Lord was watching over the infant Moses, preparing him for the work that He had for him to do, in the deliverance of the Israelites. So the Lord watches over his people, preparing their hearts to seek him for deliverance from the bondage of Satan and Sin.

Joseph, before he died, took an oath of the children of Israel, that when the Lord should visit his people with deliverance, they should carry his bones with them; so when he died they embalmed him and put him in a coffin in Egypt, and when their deliverance came, they did as Joseph had commanded, carrying his coffin through the Red Sea and in all their wanderings in the wilderness until they went into the land of Canaan, Joseph was a type of Christ, and Joseph's body journeying with them was a token of their being a people separate unto the Lord. When the Israelites passed through the Red Sea Joseph's body was with them and the Red Sea closed behind them for them never to return to Egyptian bondage, and even though in their hearts they might lust after the things of Egypt, they could not go back to it, even if they would, and in all their murmurings and lustings after the flesh-pots of Egypt, there was Joseph's body, a silent testimony that they were a separate nation, and could not go with the world. What a picture of the believer! Even after experiencing many mercies at the hand of the Lord, our hearts are so desperately wicked that were it not for God's grace we should turn back to the world: but those who are a separate people unto the Lord are dead to sin, so how can they live any longer therein; and if our hearts would turn again unto sin, we cannot live in it, for we are dead to it by the body of Christ. When the believer has the remembrance of His body, His sufferings and death in sight, sin becomes exceeding sinful.

The next ark was the ark of the cove-

nant, over which was the mercy seat, and in which was the pot of manna, the unbroken tables of commandments, and Aaron's rod that budded. This ark was made of shittim-wood, a desert growth. In this ark, being a type of Christ, the wood signified his humanity, and being a desert growth was in accord with Isaiah, who, when prophesying of Jesus, said he should be "as a root out of a dry ground." The over-lay of gold signified his Deity. The unbroken law was laid in this ark, and in Jesus is the only place where the law is kept; here also was the manna which kept alive the Israelites, and in Jesus is the sustenance of his people. Aaron was the High Priest for the Israelites, so Jesus is the High Priest of our profession. Over the ark was the mercy seat. This ark and the mercy seat were in the holiest place, where only the High Priest was allowed to enter to make atonement for the people. The High Priest's garment had bells upon it, and as long as the people heard the bells they knew that the High Priest lived. We, in this age of grace, know that our High Priest still lives, we hear the joyful sound — the proof of it — in the ministry of the gospel. The people also knew, when the High Priest presented himself alive, that his offering had been accepted. All this is symbolical of our great High Priest who still lives to make intercession for us.

The Fifth ark was the chest of the text, which was placed at the gate of the house of the Lord for the reception of the offerings which the people gave willingly, which commandment the Lord laid upon them by Moses in the wilderness, and consisted of such things as the people had to give, not simply money. Turning to the New Testament we find that this was still kept up in the time of Christ, for Jesus watched various ones casting into the treasury: among them was a poor widow who cast in two mites which make a farthing. We hear people speak of giving the widow's mite when they perhaps give five or ten

cents for some purpose, but this is not the widow's mite at all. The Scripture says she "cast in all that she had, even all her living." In so doing she was casting herself wholly in dependance upon her Lord. So, the Lord's people, when moved by the love of God and the remembrance of his mercies to them, surrender their all to him. All they have is willingly given in his service, their joy is to minister to the brethren of their substance, they love to lay aside earthly cares and assemble themselves together to hear Christ preached, sometimes having to make sacrifices to get there, but the love which they have for their Lord makes them do all these things out of a willing heart. In Acts we read of the church having all things in common, not counting anything their own, but Ananias and Sapphira kept something for themselves, and then, lying about it, they were stricken with death. So a deathlike spirit comes upon those who hold back ought that they have, they lose the joy that there is in spending and being spent in God's service. Paul exhorts believers (notice believers, not those dead in sin) that they present their bodies a living sacrifice, which is their reasonable service, their willing service, but as the hymn says, "Yet if I might make some reserve, and duty did not call, I love my God with zeal so great, that I should give him all."

Thus, from these five arks, we see that these blessings are for believers: that their salvation is of God, and comes first, before any of these other things can follow. The ark of dedication was the last, and so it is with believers, their service to the Lord is the result of first, their salvation, second, the preparation of the heart to receive these things, third, the consequent separation from the world, fourth, their acceptance in the Beloved, and fifth, dedication, their sincere desire to show forth by their walk and conversation the praise of him who has called them out of darkness into his most marvelous light.

Notes of a sermon delivered by Elder H.H. Lefferts at Mt. Zion meeting-house June 25, 1933.
(Taken by Sister Grace Aston.)

To the Dear Editors of the Signs:

Orie W. Odom, aged 99 years, enjoys reading the *Signs* very much. She usually reads it through twice. She has been confined to bed and a wheel chair for one year and nine months.

She is often referred to as being an "Association girl" as the doctor was attending as Association at Moriah Church (in 1881), of Ebenezer Association, when they went for him.

She asked for a home with Shiloh Church in June, 1914.

Written by her son.

W. W. Odom

EDITORIAL

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue for many days."
Jeremiah 32:14.

What meaning does this text have for you? Have there been evidences both sealed and open deposited in your earthen vessels? If the Lord Jesus Christ has purchased you by his own precious blood, you will from the time of your holy calling have evidences to show that you are not your own, but bought with a price. Have you experienced these evidences within your own earthen vessels?

First, let us look at some of the natural conditions that existed during the time that Jeremiah penned our text, and later on may it please the Holy Spirit to take us into its spiritual meaning.

Jeremiah was imprisoned because he foretold the captivity of King Zedekiah and the utter destruction of Judah and Jerusalem due to their sins. While Jeremiah was in prison, the Lord spoke to him concerning the buying of his

uncle's field for the right of redemption. Being the next of kin, the right of redemption belonged to Jeremiah. Thus it became him to fulfill all righteousness for it was according to the word of God.

The right of redemption consisted in this: that if anyone was forced through circumstances to sell land, the nearest blood-relation had the right, and was obliged to preserve the possession for the family, through redemption. Jeremiah, being an honest man, was very exact in paying the right amount as it was weighed and came to 17 shekels of silver. The transaction was done before witnesses and he was ordered by God to put the evidences of the purchase into an earthen vessel. It was the custom of the Jews in that day and time to put evidences of the purchase of land in earthen vessels and bury them in a corner of the purchase field. The earthen vessel would preserve the evidence and can we not say that even the most precious treasures are deposited in earthen vessels? An earthen vessel is a vessel made from the earth, made of earth; earthy. It is a vessel in which something is stored for use, as vessels of wrath or mercy.

Dear ones, you may be wondering what Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the Jews and his redeeming of land has to do with us Gentiles this day and time? I am led to believe that the children of Israel after the flesh were a typical people and God's dealings with them after the flesh was typical of His dealing with spiritual Israel today. The Apostle Paul, when referring to the experiences of the children of Israel, says, "These things were for our example." (I Cor. 10:6). The history of the wanderings of God's ancient people is also the history of his people in every age. For "All scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (II Tim. 3:16). Can we not see then that natural dealings are often the foundation on which the spiritual meaning

is built?

May God give us divine wisdom to penetrate into the spiritual meaning of this verse of scripture, seeing and feeling the things that are hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto his little ones by the power of His Holy Spirit.

First, let us notice the fallen and terrible condition of the whole Adamic race. A spiritual death, an alienation and separation from God fell upon us all, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12). "Therefore as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." (Rom. 5:18). The law saith to all who are under it, "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Rom. 3:19). "Therefore as by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3:20). What a terrible condition mankind has fallen into. How do we get out? "With man it is impossible." God's just and holy law requires perfect obedience, and justice must be satisfied. No man can render or meet these demands. This leaves us all laying in the cradle of condemnation. To be saved we must be redeemed from the curse of the law, and justice must have its satisfaction.

Now we come to this important question, who has the right of redeeming the chosen, but fallen family of God? Who is to undertake so great and wonderful work of redemption? Who is qualified for this great assignment? Would it not be our next of kin? Jeremiah, being a type and figure of Christ, was the next of kin; therefore, he had the right of redeeming his next of kin's field or land and the evidences of redemption was put in an earthen vessel.

The incarnation of Christ is an amazing and extraordinary display of

power and wisdom. How the eternal Son of God should become man is beyond human intellect, yet we know "with God all things are possible." (Matt. 10:26). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." (John 1:1). "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:4). Incarnation, a state of being clothed or manifested in a body of flesh, was a voluntary act on the part of Christ. It was necessary that the Son of God take upon him our nature to put himself in a capacity to purchase redemption for His people. When Christ was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, this brought about two perfect and distinct natures: the Godhead and the manhood. These two were joined in one person. Though Christ's birth was in the way of nature, his conception was supernatural by the power of the Holy Ghost; therefore, he was conceived and born without sin. He was the seed of the woman but not the seed of a man. Christ's body was not a body "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin" as our bodies were. Christ became what he was not, but ceased not to be what he was, even the eternal Son of God.

Being both God and man, Jesus became a fit mediator between God and man. He could mediate with God, as God, and with man, as man, and thus able to lay hands on both. As man he could be made under the law, and as God capable of yielding perfect obedience unto it. As man he had blood to shed in redeeming his people to God. As man he had a life he could lay down, a ransom for his people, making full satisfaction on their behalf. As God, he could support his human nature under the load of sin and suffering while meeting and fulfilling with perfection all requirements of law and justice in bringing everlasting salvation for his people.

Now may we be blessed to see who has the right of redeeming God's fallen

family? Who is He that has become our next of kin? Christ is our next of kin, therefore He and He alone had the right of redemption. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also likewise took part of the same that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." (Heb. 2:14). and "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. 8:3).

Christ not only had the right of redemption by being the next of kin, but also because they were his by gift. In speaking to the Father, Jesus says, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." (John 17:6) and "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that, he should give eternal life to as many as thou has given him." (John 17:2). And also, "And this is the Father's will which hast sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." (John 6:39). If you had some stock that got out into a person's cornfield and they did a lot of damage; then the owner of the field penned them up and required a certain price for their redemption, who would have the lawful right to pay the price and redeem them? Would it not be the owner? Therefore, Christ had a double right for redeeming His people: first by becoming the next of kin, and second by ownership. Could this account for the reference to His making a double payment for them. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isa. 40:2).

Now with regards to our redemption, the scripture says, "Ye are bought with a price." (I Cor. 7:23). If then we have been purchased with a price, we shall have certain evidences, both sealed and open in order to show and prove our title to be legal and good according to God's divine law and custom. Jeremiah, at the

command of God, put the evidences of the purchase in an earthen vessel and buried it in the field. I believe that the field spiritually represents the church of Christ. An earthen vessel represents these old natural bodies of ours that were originally made from the earth and are sometimes referred to in scriptures as vessels. Christ adds these vessels to his Church daily such as should be saved. "And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47). As the earthen vessel with evidence was buried in the field, so our renewed souls when quickened by the Holy Spirit are buried in the mystical Church of Christ. These are the vessels made unto honor and Jesus says to vessels made unto honor, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10).

In redemption spiritual as well as in redemption literal, there must be two kinds of evidences: sealed and open. Sealed evidences are those evidences coming from a renewed heart that has been made good ground bringing forth fruit at different folds, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty. And these fruits or evidences are sealed, or undisclosed to the world, but known in part to the one in possession of them. Open evidences are those evidences not concealed or hidden, but are uncovered and exposed to the mental view. Spiritual evidences are worked in the quickened family of God by the power of the Holy Spirit and are known as good works. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10). Spiritual good works are worked in us by the power of God and it is very difficult at times for the children of God to realize that they possess any good works and are ready to say, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink" etc. (Matt. 25:37).

If we are among those bought with a price, quickened, and called from darkness into his marvelous light, then my dear friends, we must have evidences, both sealed and open in order to have a clear title. May we be given to truthfully examine ourselves and evaluate with seriousness the feelings that we feel and have felt in our inward parts. Oh, how important it is for us to be vessels of honor and not vessels of dishonor, vessels of mercy and not of wrath. "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory." (Rom. 9:23.) May the Spirit of God now lead us to view some evidences that are sealed in the hearts of God's quickened family.

It is a blessed truth that until the Holy Spirit calls us with a holy calling out of darkness and ignorance and establishes his kingdom within us, we feel nothing, we know nothing spiritually. We must be quickened from a state of deadness in trespasses and sins. "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Eph. 2:1). We must be given spiritual life and light in order to feel our corrupt nature, what a sinful and wretched people we are. We must have spiritual light to shine into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." (II Cor. 4:6, 7). The only true light comes from God's shining into our soul to see and know "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." (John 17:3). If we have spiritual life, we will also have feeling. If we do not have feeling in our hearts and conscience, where is our religion? If we love our brethren, we love in feeling. If we rejoice in hearing God's

word, we rejoice in feeling. If we are given to pray, we pray in feeling. I believe spiritual life and feeling are the first sealed evidences put into our old earthen vessels. Have you experienced different feelings in your heart and conscience at times, causing you to either rejoice in feeling or being cast down in feeling? If you have, this is an evidence that Jesus Christ has purchased you with his own precious blood.

The fear of God – what brings about this godly fear in our hearts? Is it not a revelation by His divine light to see what we are by nature? That we are the chief among sinners, condemned by God's just and holy law. We feel the wrath and power of God and cry out unclean, unclean. "Woe is me! I am undone: because I am a man of unclean lips." (Isa. 6:5) Have you ever felt this fear with power into your conscience to make you say I exceedingly fear and quake? David says, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments." (Psalms 119:120) Fear arises from a sense of sin and guilt in our conscience. Adam and Eve became sensible of their great sin and nakedness and attempted to hide themselves through fear of God. When the law is brought with power into our consciences, does it not bring guilt and a dread of punishment? God is everywhere present and nowhere absent, there is no hiding from him. Do we not read in God's Word how he has dealt with sinful people of old because of their sins? He destroyed all flesh from the earth with the exception of eight souls. He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. All of the first born of the Egyptians in Egypt were slain. Pharaoh's army was swallowed up by the Red Sea.

There are many more incidents of his dealings against sin. Who knows the power of his anger? The mountains quake at him, the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence. Who can stand before his indignation? The law

accuses us of sin, pronounces us guilty for the law is a ministration of condemnation, therefore putting a curse upon us all for "cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. 3:10) Godly fear in our hearts should cause us to have a sincere desire not to neglect the assembling of ourselves together to worship "God in spirit and in truth." If we have been given this evidence of godly fear it acts as "a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death." (Prov. 14:27). What a terrible feeling this fear brings upon us, yet again we learn that, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Prov. 9:10). Fear, then is an evidence of your purchase by the Lord Jesus Christ. This fear is hidden in the heart and lies deep in the soul, yet this fear will act as circumstances to bring it forth.

Faith: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1). Faith is a "gift of God." He who gives us faith must also keep it for us for we can no more keep it than we can reach out and get it. Faith may often have to struggle through trials, tribulations, and against unbelief. No faith can act on God but that which comes from God. True faith is exercised on God the Father, as having chosen his people in Christ Jesus to grace and glory from everlasting. This election of God of a certain people is brought into our hearts by faith when the gospel comes to us not in word only but in power. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God." (I Cor. 2:5). The work of faith then is to believe God's word, as he is pleased to commute with power to our soul. One of the special operations of faith then is that it mixes with the word. "Unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them; not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." (Heb. 4:2) Christ is the object of our faith. True believers are given

through faith to embrace Christ as "the way, the truth, and the life." Faith acts as a light in a sinner's heart to feel himself a miserable, undone sinner and lost without a Saviour. God the Holy Spirit applies God's word to the conscience. He thus raises up the grace of faith and gives us to feast upon the Bread of Life to our comfort and to the glory of God. It is called precious faith because it is so rare and on account of the blessings it put us in possession of. "For we are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." (Gal. 3:26). God the Holy Spirit is also an object of our faith. If we are given to trust in Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls, we must be given to trust in the Holy Spirit to carry on the work of grace in us as long as we journey here below. We must be given faith to believe that the Holy Spirit who "hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6). We see that the whole world is divided into two classes of people, elect and reprobate. We may often fear to have the marks of a reprobate with a false faith. Yet, the people with false faith will often brag about what they have done for God: but the possessors of true faith can only rejoice in what they trust Christ has done for them. False faith exalts the creature, but true faith exalts the Saviour. The reprobate depends upon himself with a little help from God; but the regenerate elect, by faith, depends upon God for everything. Faith establishes her house upon a rock and despises all human inventions, human works, and houses built upon sand. Dear brethren, does your experience give you some evidences that you have the fruit of faith deposited in your earthen vessel as a sign of your redemption?

Hope. True hope is the "anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." (Heb. 6:19). Christ Jesus in our only hope. The sources that feed our hope are testimonies from God, the application of blood to the conscience and evidences to

give us waymarks that we are traveling toward Canaan Land. Has the wrath of God in a holy law ever visited your conscience and felt you feeling in black despair on account of your awful sins and iniquities? Did hope cause you to cry to God for mercy? A hope of God's implanting will in time raise your head above all opposition. "Cast down but not destroyed." It may have appeared at times that eternal burning was your everlasting portion. Yet, when on the border of despair, your hope rose up as a word of Scripture was dropped with power into your conscience bringing joy and peace to your soul. Jonah in the belly of the whale said, "I will look again toward thy holy temple." Because of darkness of mind, hardness of heart, deadness of soul, alluring after things of this world, hope has to labor and endure. It is the patience of hope that proves its reality and genuineness. Hope goes forward with patience, bearing what comes upon it. Patience is needed for hope to endure all despondency brought on by the weapons that Satan uses against us. We may feel to have very little evidences of hope at times, yet it is a sealed evidence of our purchase that we would not exchange for all the world.

Spirit of prayer. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom. 8:26). There is no real spiritual prayer, no acceptable prayer to the Lord except that which is created by the operation of God the Spirit upon the heart of a believer. We must first feel a need for prayer, certain things must be worked in the soul by the Holy Spirit, such as, a deep sense of our sinfulness, our guilt, our wretchedness and misery. So in true prayer there is a confession of our sins and guilt, a coming before God guilty and condemned and there is a calling upon him for mercy, for help and for deliverance. "God be merciful to me a

sinner." (Luke 18:13). In speaking to God as a man speaketh to his friend, we tell him of our daily shortcomings, we express our thanks for all blessings and we beg for our wants, if it be according to His will. It is a comfort to know that "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers." (I Peter 3:12). Have you ever felt that God has answered your prayers? Not necessarily in the way and time in which you may have wanted, but in His own way and time. His own way and time is always best for our good and to His honor.

A drawing of the soul by the truth. God has a way of causing a born again person to long for the truth. A person will go out in search of the truth and God uses many wonderful ways to guide him there. The gospel of Christ which is truth brings to light the beauty of election, of predestination to eternal life, and the effects of sovereign grace upon a new born soul. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32). Truth is a wonderful evidence lodged in our earthen vessels by the Holy Spirit as another evidence of our being purchased with His atoning blood. We are given to love His precious truth for it is the power of God unto salvation. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3).

There may be many more sealed evidences lodged in a person's soul by the Holy Spirit such as secret supports in time of troubles, secret delights, comfort during deep depression of spirit, strength for things which you alone would be unequal to. Have you felt any of the sealed evidences mentioned above?

We will now notice some open evidences.

Love. I believe that love is both sealed and open. Spiritual love comes from the ever flowing fountain of Christ. "We love him because he first loved us." (I

John 4:19). God did not love us because we loved Him, but He loved us long before we ever had a particle of love for Him. His love is not influenced by anything in the creature. His love is immutable, it is holy. It is gracious and from everlasting. No man in a state of nature ever did or can spiritually love God because "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be." (Rom. 8:7). Flesh is opposed to Spirit as nature is opposed to Grace. Love is also an open evidence as we see it exemplified in Ruth's cleaving to Naomi when Orpah went back to her people. Love for God's people, for the truth's sake is felt and seen, as it flows from breast to breast. How wonderful it is to feel and see this love in action among the family of God. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (John 3:14). We may not feel the sweetness of this love at all times because love is tried by enmity, its opposite. Satan will at times bring forth envious feelings, jealousy, and suspicions. True divine love will come forth laboring against these weapons of Satan; divine love will spring up again and again. True love originates with the Father, centers in Jesus, and is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Love is the key that opens the door to the pardoning of all sins, justifying of sinners, and hides a multitude of transgressions. The love of God is found in every promise, every precept, and every declaration concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and all the elect in him. Surely we have felt at times a love for God, for His truth, and for His people. This love is a very precious evidence of our purchase.

A visible change. A visible change takes place in a quickened soul. Have you been turned from darkness to light? Have you been brought from the power of Satan unto God? "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:

old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new." (II Cor. 5:17). Your stoney heart God has replaced with a heart of flesh and with it an implantation of new principles of grace, a new spirit, new affections and desires, new thoughts, a new course of life. Old things are passed away. Your old religion, your old fig leaf righteousness, creature strength, etc. This is an open evidence in the one experiencing the change, and it is always a joyful sight to the children of God.

Separation from the world.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean things." (II Cor. 6:17). Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers. Be ye not yoked with them in their unfruitful works of darkness, touch not their unclean ways in fulfilling the desires of their flesh and minds. Separation from the world is an open evidence of a child of God. You do not come away from them because you hate these people, but because you cannot approve of their ways. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6:14) or "Can two walk together, except they be agreed." (Amos 3:3). The word of truth says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." There are other open evidences such as strict honesty, joining the people of God, readiness to forgive, meekness, humbleness, etc.

My dear friends, can you detect any of these evidences that Christ has lodged in your earthen vessels? If you can, you have a blessed evidence that Jesus Christ has paid double for your redemption. You surely have evidence that you are a sinner, and Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. But we must become live sinners, made alive to our sins as being exceedingly sinful. Our Lord Jesus Christ carried evidences of your purchase into heaven with him,

for just before he ascended on high, he said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side and be not faithless but believing." (John 20:27).

When given to meditate upon our old corrupt nature, our guilt, our sinfulness, our blindness and our helplessness: who can estimate the worth, appreciate the blessing or fully understand the value of the grace of God in the soul? When these precious evidences of our purchase are shed abroad in our earthen vessels by the power of the Holy spirit, never to be lost or taken away, we in turn receive a soft heart for a stoney one, we receive life for death, light for darkness, wisdom for ignorance, faith for unbelief, love for enmity, the kingdom of Christ for the kingdom of Satan, the law of grace in the mind for the law of sin in the members and the prince of peace for the prince of darkness. You may say I believe, for all whom Christ died will be saved and will bear fruits. But my concern is, am I a vessel of honor with true evidences of my having been purchased? Christ's people will be concerned about themselves, you can see these evidences in your brethren but not always in yourself. Yet, your brethren can see them in you. The brethren who have these true evidences will ask when did we do these things, and the people of the world will ask when did we fail to do these things?

Now my dear brethren, may the Lord grant you a heaven upon earth by enabling you to live upon, to look upon, and feed with faith upon a precious Saviour. His person is glorious, for He is God and man united in one Christ, and all the beauties of heaven and earth meet and center in Him. His blood is precious blood. For the very feeling we have of sin should teach us how much we stand in need of that open fountain of Christ's most precious blood. If we look within ourselves, there is a spring and fountain of uncleanness, therefore, we

must look out of ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ whose blood cleanseth us from all sin. It is a most blessed truth that the precious blood of Jesus Christ hath greater power to save than all our sins together with the law, hath to condemn. It is an evidence that Christ is our exceeding joy when we really long to be with him and see him "face to face." Yet, we long to be reconciled here below until our departure comes.

An unworthy sinner in hope of mercy,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick

SPECIAL NOTICE

A SPECIAL MEETING WILL BE HELD, THE LORD WILLING, SATURDAY MORNING BEFORE THE FOURTH SUNDAY (SEPT. 26, 1981) AT DAN RIVER PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH, MAYFIELD, N.C., BEGINNING PROMPTLY AT 10:00 A.M.

THIS MEETING IS BEING CALLED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC. AND WILL BE MODERATED BY THE SAME.

ONE PURPOSE IS TWO-FOLD:

1st, WE WISH TO GIVE THE BAPTISTS OF THE OLD SCHOOL OR PRIMITIVE ORDER AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONFRONT THE BOARD WITH ANY QUESTION THEY MAY HAVE REGARDING RECENT AGITATIONS WHICH HAVE GREATLY DISTURBED THE PEACE OF THE CHURCHES.

2nd, THE BOARD WISHES TO PRESENT INFORMATION THE MAJORITY OF OUR BRETHREN ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH IN THIS REGARD, AS WELL AS POINT OUT THE DANGEROUS NEW ALLIANCES BEING FORGED BY EXCLUDED MINISTERS.

OLD SCHOOL PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS FROM ANYWHERE IN THE UNITED STATES ARE WELCOME AND URGED TO COME. THE TIMES ARE PERILOUS.

THE EDITORS

in Moses Cone Hospital in Greensboro. He was 65 years old. He leaves behind to mourn his loss his wife, Mamie Lanier Bisher, two sons, Gary and Dwight, and five grandchildren. One granddaughter preceded him in death.

He joined Greensboro Primitive Baptist Church in 1979, having had a desire for many years to join. He expressed his love for the people of the Church.

His funeral was preached by his Pastor, Elder Kenneth Key, and opening prayer by Elder Leonard Key. The prayer and many comforting words were said. His body was laid to rest in Lakeview Cemetery, with many beautiful flowers over his grave.

Written By Mamie Bisher

ELDER REGGIE ROSS WOLF

Reggie Ross Wolf was born May 19, 1910 to Sidney Schuyler and Minnie Nita (Smallwood) Wolf in Topeka, Kansas and he passed from this life on April 23, 1981 at the age of 79 years, 11 months, and four days.

His Mother later married W. K. Haygood and moved to New Mexico where he grew up. He married Miss Laura Lewis on November 4, 1935, in Clovis, New Mexico.

He united with the Predestinarian Primitive Baptist in May 1946 in Lawn, Texas, and was baptized by his Brother, Elder C. M. Haywood. He later moved to Oregon and was ordained to the full work of the ministry in September, 1949. Elder Wolf spent most of his ministry among the churches in Oregon and Washington.

He is survived by his faithful wife, one son, Lewis Alan, and one brother, C. M. Haygood, nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were conducted by Brother Jimmy Hamrick and his body was laid to rest in Mountainair Cemetery.

Submitted by request of the family.

Elder C. M. Haygood

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to call from our midst Sister Nannie Mewborn. She was born October 23, 1884 and died March 29, 1981, making her stay on earth 96 years and 5 months.

Sister Mewborn was a faithful member of our church, and attended until her infirmities prevented her from doing so. She was a great supporter of our church and was always willing to do her part.

O B I T U A R I E S

CARL CLAYSON BISHER

Brother Carl Clayson Bisher was born October 19, 1914 and died December 24, 1979

Sister Mewborn was a dear sister, for to know her was to love her. She was blessed with three children who saw to it that she was well cared for.

Sister Nannie was the oldest member of Tarboro Church and she was proud to tell people that she was an Old Baptist. She was a firm believer of Salvation by Grace and Grace alone. I'm told she died in her sleep and what a blessing it was that God called her at such a peaceful time.

We feel that our loss is her eternal gain, and feel she is resting in peace, waiting for that day when God will call His little ones home to a place where trials and tribulations will be no more.

The church at Tarboro request that four copies of this resolution of respect be made: one for the church records, one for the family and one for publication in both the *Signs of the Times* and Zion's Landmark.

This done in order at our April conference meeting.

Elder D. B. Stokes, Moderator
John H. Coker, Clerk

MRS. BETTY MAE PAGE BRADNER

I feel totally inadequate to write a suitable memorial to my dear sister (in the flesh), but a compelling force bids me make the attempt.

Betty Mae Page Bradner was born on July 19, 1899 to the late Willard J. and Mary Betty Gwyn Page in Caswell County, North Carolina. She was translated from this life on March 30, 1981 while a patient at Roman Eagle Nursing Home in Danville, Virginia. Her husband, Harry Bradner, preceded her in death January 13, 1980. She is survived by Mrs. Wilma B. Weber of Danville, Virginia; Mrs. Betty B. Henderson of Altamonte Springs, Florida; and Numa P. Bradner of Richmond, Virginia.

Early in life she manifested the unmistakable qualities of a true saint of God and with this evidence came a love for the Lord and His church. She was gladly received into the fellowship of Reidsville Primitive Baptist Church in 1937, where she was baptized by her former pastor, the late Elder O. J. Denny. She remained a loyal and devoted member until passing.

On hearing of her passing I immediately felt that a dear saint had entered into "that

land of pure delight where saints immortal reign". Her attributes were many, but her Christlike purity of heart and nobleness of thought, together with her meekness and humility, gave evidence that she had been taught of God. She loved the doctrine of salvation by grace and never wavered from her belief in this doctrine. Her pastor, Elder D. V. Spangler, so aptly spoke of her "adorning her profession with an orderly walk and a Godly conversation".

Words cannot express how much we miss her, but our grief is tempered by the assurance that her dear spirit is basking in the light of the glorious presence of her Redeemer.

Her body was entombed in Reidlawn Cemetery in Reidsville, North Carolina, on April 2, 1981.

The language of the poet concludes very appropriately:

"The golden gates were opened,
a gentle voice said 'come'
and with farewells unspoken
she calmly entered 'home'."

Submitted by one who loved her as a sister in
Christ,
Mamie P. Aldridge

MRS. SALLIE CARTER

Sister Sallie Carter of Route 2, Madison, N.C. died July 20, 1980 at Annie Penn Hospital after a long illness. She attended her meetings regularly until her eyesight failed.

Surviving are daughters, Mrs. Gracie Synder and Mrs. Mabel Trent, Stoneville, N.C., Mrs. Emma Amos, Madison, Mrs. Sarah Carter, Reidsville, Mrs. Nanny Lindsay, and Betty Hubbard, Reidsville, Polly Fraley of Faith, sons Walter, William, Ruben, of Madison, Hugh Carter, Greensboro, Tryee, Reidsville, Harry, Jackson of Salisbury, N.C., 34 grandchildren, and 34 great grandchildren.

Her family cared for her during her long illness. Sister Carter manifested the grace and faith in God thru many trials in her life.

Funeral services were at Pleasantville with her pastor, Elder H. W. Wray officiating. Burial was in the cemetery there.

Written by request of the church in conference, April 4, 1981

Rachel Wray

Signs of the Times

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
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THE EARLY RELIGIOUS LIFE OF
ELDER DAVID BARTLEY
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

(Continued from last month.)

CHAPTER IX ORDAINED

In September, 1854, we left the kind home of my dear sister and returned to Jasper County, Illinois, where my father had been called to put off his Christian armor about three years before. My membership remained in the old home church by my request. Perhaps twenty or more brethren and sisters were holding church letters, who had emigrated from Indiana, and they would importune me to speak at their frequent meetings, but I refused because of my long distance from the watchcare of the home church. Moreover, my fleshly mind again resisted my impressions to speak to the people in the name of the Lord, and I had stoutly resolved to resume the study of medicine. For I had persuaded myself that the Lord had not called me to preach the gospel, so incompetent and unfit was I, and so I had laid aside the Bible and taken up the medical textbooks.

Thus time went on, and I seemed to be making satisfactory progress in the way of my own choosing and flattered myself that I should succeed. I had reasoned with myself that it was only a waste of time for me to study the Scriptures with the idea of expounding them, because I could do no good in the ministry, while as a physician I might be useful. I did not see then how

ambitious, self-willed and stubborn I was, nor how short-sighted and faithless.

But one evening, near the approach of winter, I took up off the center table the medical book which I was so perseveringly reviewing and turned to sit down, when my eyes were riveted to the Bible on the table; conflicting emotions filled my heart and I stood irresolute and trembling; but the conflict was short, for the power of the Word asserted itself in my heart, and as a subdued child I laid down the coveted book, took up the dear Book of books, which was more precious now for having been neglected. Thus ended my medical reading for all that winter, for the Bible had become my dearest text-book. So I learned, with Jeremiah, "that the way of man is not in himself".

The spring of 1855, it was in the hearts of ten of us to send to our home churches in Indiana, and ask them to send their Elders and Deacons to constitute us into a gospel church. Accordingly, a goodly number of our beloved ministers and brethren came, among them Elder Asa Nay and Ransom Riggs, and the Conn's Creek church sent to me by her messengers a letter in full fellowship to enter into the new church. But dear Elder McQueary came not with them, for the Lord had taken him to Himself.

On Saturday, May 18, 1855, we submitted to the faithful Council our church letters, articles, and rules, and they cordially received us as a gospel church, known as "The Hickory Creek Regular Baptist Church of Christ", and gave us the right hand of fellowship.

Of those ten, seven have fallen asleep, and of all the dear messengers of the churches who thus received and comforted us, not one remains. They had been the beloved companions of my father, and with him they rest from their labors; also, nearly all the ministers whom I knew in the beginning of my ministry.

My trials in the ministry now began anew and in earnest, of which I cannot speak at length, only to say that they were measured to me in the infinite wisdom and mercy of God, and that trials and afflictions are the common heritage of the Lord's servants. "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us". This is the Divine plan and end, and it is to the glory of God.

The first year of the infant church was a time of severe trial, and no one was added to it. But after the night of weeping, then cometh joy in the morning; for the Master came and said: "Peace be unto you". He gave us joy and gladness, and greatly revived and built us up in the power and comfort of His grace. The second year fifteen, I think, were added by baptism and numbers by letter; the presence of the Lord was often felt in our worshiping assemblies, and we grew in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior.

The brethren now became urgent for my ordination to the full work of the gospel ministry, but I felt that it would be premature, and plead with them against it. For I could not yet feel satisfied that the Lord had put me in the ministry, and it seemed too great and scared a work for me; therefore I looked for the time to come in the near future when I could and should quit trying to preach. Moreover, I feared the brethren wanted me ordained as a matter of convenience, as we had to frequently send to Indiana for a minister to come and baptize our added members; but they kindly assured me that they were satisfied the Lord had called me to the work and felt it their duty to have me ordained to it, or set apart. And so, with fear and trembling, I yielded; for I could not obstinately resist the church. Accordingly, nearly the same Elders

and Deacons who pronounced us the church of Christ again convened in solemn Council with the church the second day of January, 1857, and by laying on of hands and prayer ordained me to the full work of gospel ministry. The ministers officiating were Elders Riggs, Nay and Jackson (who had himself been recently ordained).

The Lord's good work of grace still went on in our midst, and there was much comfort in the church; for believers in Jesus were frequently baptized and added to it. Many of them were heads of families, influential and worthy; some of their children were also gathered into the fold. My eldest brother, Mordecai, was received on his letter from our old home church (Conn's Creek), and his wife by baptism. The wives of my brothers John, Amos, Johnson, and Joseph, and my last named three brothers were all baptized and added to our company in process of time. At the time of my ordination dear Elder Nay baptized sisters Sophia Broderick and Rachel Bartley (John's wife) and our brother Joseph. The thermometer was below zero, and after cutting away the thick ice the water had to be stirred to prevent its freezing; yet there was no harm. This showed strong faith and warm hearts. Later on it was my privilege to baptize my brother John's eldest son, James, the second wife of my brother Amos, my brother Joseph's wife and her sister, and a sister of my brother Mordecai's wife, besides many others. Still later I baptized for this church also the eldest son of my brother Johnson, Marion and his wife and her two sisters.

Many, very many, of all those loved ones have gone on before me to appear with Christ in His glory at the resurrection of all the redeemed—of which gospel baptism is the type and pledge—when death shall be swallowed up in victory. Of my brothers and their wives, Joseph and wife and the wife of Amos only are left, and my nephew,

Jimmy, long since fell asleep in Jesus—two, also, of my own little family of four; first our sunny baby boy, when nearly twenty-one, Willett Tyler, and two days later his mother. That they all died in the Lord and live with Him, I have the comforting assurance; and, in the same cemetery with my father, they rest from their labors. A little while before our noble son closed his eyes his brother, Gilbert, asked him: "Tyler, do you feel that Jesus is with you?" He raised and clapped his hands, a heavenly smile lighted up his face and he said, "Yes, and that is why I am so happy".

CHAPTER X FLEEING, JONAH LIKE

It has been said that we are creatures of circumstances; and the force of circumstances, with our environments, certainly do operate upon us as causes and influences in shaping and directing our course in life.

Having spent my means as a medical student, the necessities of my family pressed upon me, and receiving no aid from the brethren and churches to whom I ministered in the gospel, my lot seemed trying and hard. Thus burdened and discouraged, I was tempted to think that if the Lord had really put me in the ministry and made it my work to preach the gospel of the kingdom, He would also have put in the hearts and minds of His loving disciples, the children of the kingdom, to loosen my hands, by helping me bear this heavy double burden, and that my circumstances would not be so bitterly trying. Trying to make my dubious way under such clouds and darkness, fears and temptations, it often seemed to me scarcely possible that the Lord had put me in the ministry; therefore, much of the time I was strongly tempted to turn away from it and quit trying to preach. In my spirit I chafed and suffered, repined and mourned, and my heart was bowed under its heavy cross. I was doing some practice, but not enough to

keep us out of debt and comfortable; for the country was generally healthy and the practice was divided among several doctors. The abiding conviction was in my mind that the brethren should cheerfully supply the lack in our necessities out of their abundance; but they did not seem to feel so, and I was too timid and cowardly to instruct them in this duty of mutual ministration and service; therefore I was really as remiss as were they. But all my life I had heard our ministers preach against the bishop or shepherd being supported by the flock, and I knew that our people were prejudiced against helping their preachers. Therefore I kept all these things to myself and pondered them in my heart, and my soul was pressed down as a cart beneath its sheaves.

It is due that I say of the brethren of the two churches I served, one about forty miles west of us, that they manifested warm appreciation of my ministry in every way, except this failure to minister to my necessities--and I was at fault in this, in not having the faithful courage to teach them the gospel rule: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ". I should have impressed this "reasonable service" upon them, not more for my sake than theirs, but especially in faithfulness and honor to the Lord, whose servants we are. But I was young and inexperienced in the full work of the gospel minister, and there was no father in the ministry near me to counsel and help me.

The conflict between preaching and practicing medicine would rise again and again, and truly necessity was laid upon me to do both. Yet I felt that I should finally have to give up one or the other. It had seemed to me that if I could go away from the Baptists I might then lay down the ministry, devote myself to the sick and get along better, and I would occasionally talk to some of the home brethren about doing this, but they would laugh at me, and had no idea that

I would do such a thing.

Well, after struggling on thus in this unequal warfare about five years, from my ordination until the fall of 1861, the Lord then gave me up to have my own way, and I went away into the hospital service of the federal army as a nurse.

The Sunday before I started we had a blessed meeting, and we all felt the comforting presence of the Lord, causing our hearts to overflow in love to one another, and I felt that, it would be hard for me to leave all that were dear and beloved, I would draw back if I had not already enlisted. For I was leaving the church without a preacher, as a flock without a shepherd, and some of the aged sisters wept when I left them.

Before we had been in camp two months a dear neighbor youth died in the hospital, and I was detailed to take him home for burial. After my arrival home his family (who were Baptists) sent a request for me to preach in our churchhouse at his funeral. This I could not refuse, although it seemed impossible; for the spirit of the ministry was gone from me and I had become as indifferent as any natural person. When the time came, as I walked down the aisle of the crowded house, shaking hands with my neighbors and brethren on the right and left, I was shocked to find that my love for the brethren had grown cold, so that I felt only the same natural regard for them as for the other friends. This made me feel that I was not a Christian, after all, and that it would be hypocrisy and a mockery for me to go in the pulpit and try to preach. But on reaching the front, dear old Brother Jerry Ferguson grasped my hand and wept. My cold indifference was gone the next moment, the love of the brethren rushed in and filled my whole being and I dropped in a seat, overcome with emotion. It was a relief and comfort to me then to preach, and the Lord gave me liberty.

But alas! how could I ever bear to go away and leave the dear children of God

again? For, with a poet, I now deeply felt:

"Here my best friends, my kindred dwell;
Here Christ, my Savior, reigns."

The next day I had to leave for Camp Butler, and sorrowful indeed was the parting with my little family and all. At midnight I re-entered the hospital, crushed and broken in spirit, and from that time on I was a suffering invalid-sick in mind and body. A complication of ailments set in and became chronic, induced by exposure and soul-trouble. For now I sorrowfully felt that I had fled from the commandment of the Lord, as much so as did Jonah, and had rebelled against Him and grieved the Holy Spirit.

The loving Son of God, the Father, had meekly and obediently endured all things and laid down His righteous life for me; but now, because of some sacrifices and trials, I had forsaken Him and His blessed service, in the delusive hope of making the way better and my cross lighter. How terribly deceived by Satan and the flesh! Instead, my troubles were dreadfully increased; for I now endured the hidings of the Lord's countenance, felt that I had sinned against light and knowledge and forsaken my own mercies.

If the South had rebelled against earthly authority, I against Heaven. I had tried to satisfy my conscience with the plea that it was a worthy cause and good work for me to enter the army to minister to the suffering soldiers; but He who saved me from perdition had said to me, "Go, preach Jesus and His righteousness", therefore, I was disobedient, and had denied my Redeemer and Lord. Seeing and feeling this, I was filled with anguish of spirit and deep repentance. My soul was solitary, utterly desolate and comfortless. I preferred to be alone in my cold and dismal tent, where I could read the sorrowful Psalms of David of old, so expressive of the troubles of my own heart--and I could not read any other

part of the Bible. For the Lord had taken His Spirit and the light of His countenance from me and left me to my own wretched self. Yet I dared not complain or murmur at this fearful affliction and suffering; for I had willfully turned away from the blessed work of the gospel ministry, forsaken the brethren, and brought all this calamity upon myself. I remembered how good they had been to attend upon my ministry, their Christian confidence in me and loving fellowship for me, so that great had been our mutual comfort and joy in our meetings, for the Lord had blessed us with His heavenly presence. And as all this came back to me in my forlorn camp-life, I most painfully felt that those were heavenly places, when contrasted with these. For, instead of the society of home and spiritual kindred, I was in the midst of the most ungodly and profane men and deprived of almost every comfort. Hence, as the winter slowly advanced, my maladies grew worse, until it was evident that without a change and relief, death must soon take me out of the army.

To die thus was a thought that I could not bear, for I earnestly desired that the Lord might first mercifully heal my backslidings and restore unto me the joy of His salvation, before my departure, and for this blessing my broken and humbled spirit fervently prayed. Yet my prayers seemed shut out from His holy heaven, and I sadly feared that I had too grievously gone astray from Him to hope for the return of His presence and blessing on earth, and must die in this deep affliction and darkness. Still, my trust and hope in God abided with me, and I firmly believed that, though He might suffer me to die in this most wretched state, yet He would raise me up to His holy heaven to suffer, sorrow and weep no more, and to die no more. This was the balm of my heart and solace of my soul--and it was all there was left me.

In February, 1862, we were encamped at Ft. Henry, Tenn., where General

Grant marshaled all the forces under his command, preparatory to transporting them up the river to Pittsburg Landing; therefore the regimental hospitals were abandoned, and the sick and disabled were sent away to the general hospitals, upon the orders of the senior surgeons of the respective regiments, without which no one could have leave of absence. On this account I had to share a wretched little tent with two soldiers, without fire, lying on a thin mattress and it on the wet ground. The season was very rainy, with sleet and snow, and at times the water would run in under my bedding until my garments would be wet, and the only way to either dry or warm was to stand out in the inclement weather before a smoky fire of green timber. Then, the food we had to subsist on was unfit for a sick person, and, moreover, I was suffering greatly from chronic indigestion and dysentery, so that my food was often thrown up, and I was literally both starving and freezing.

(continued next month)

Winston Salem, N.C.

Dear Brother Williams,

I get the *Signs* and so much enjoy reading it. I love the Truth it presents. I really loved and praised God for the fine scriptural sermon in the July issue "Predestination" by Elder H. H. Lefferts. That dear brother knew about Bible predestination.

I do not take nor care to take any of the "conditional periodicals". I did take "Old Faith Contender" until Brother Berry stopped publication. The *Signs* and "Old Faith Contender" are the only two Old Baptist periodicals I know of that present the truth.

Having never met personally any of you dear brethren on the *Signs* staff, I love you for the truth you stand for and love you in the Lord.

Enclosing \$1.00 to help. I and my wife are both on a disability income. Hope to be able to send a little more later on.

Remember us poor sinners in prayer. There are three in our family, myself, my wife, and daughter, aged 14.

Yours in hope of eternal life,
Augustus Webb

THE SWORD OF THE LORD

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword." Matt. 10:34

These words were not spoken by some evil spirit, nor yet Satan, but by the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Contrary as this may seem to the natural mind of man, this is truth; for every word spoken by Jesus Christ is truth; for he is the way, the truth and the life.

"For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

For many years this scripture caused me to wonder and have many anxious thoughts and questions. Why would the King of Salem, who is the King of peace, set at variance those who we naturally think should be at peace with each other? I believe I can now understand, at least in part, something of which the Lord was saying. In the preceeding portion of this chapter we find a portion of the answer. Christ sent forth his sheep in the midst of wolves and gave them instruction and warning. The warning was, "beware of men." These men will bring you before councils, and they will scourge you, and bring you before governors and kings for his sake; and this shall be a testimony against them. The instruction was that, when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

We most often think of this as referring to the ones sent forth to preach the

gospel; in other words, the Elders. But I believe this is to every child of God who would speak of the glory of God and his hope in Christ. And to whom do we most often speak of this? Are they not the members of our own house? And what is so often the response we receive? They are set at variance against you: they will fight against you with everything in their power: they will take council with each other and with those with whom they have formed a confederacy, which is the false church. They will hate you and even deliver you unto death. Such are the trails and tribulations of those who would profess their faith in the atoning blood of Christ. But who among the saints of God has not so suffered? "Yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Time and space would not permit, (even if I could,) to name all those mentioned in the scriptures who suffered in the behalf of Christ; but I would like to mention a few. Abel was the first and was slain by his brother Cain; Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah and even all the rest of God's holy prophets. There is not one found who did not so suffer. And our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ suffered more than all combined. Yes, the persecutions and sufferings began with the very first ones born in this world, and will not cease until our Lord shall return without sin unto salvation, and shall say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." There will be no suffering there, and all our tears and fears shall be wiped away.

These trials, tribulations and persecutions are never good to us, but they are certainly good for us; for they serve God's purpose of trying our faith; and the trial of our faith is more precious than silver and gold. It is not God seeking to find out how much faith we

have or how strong it is. Oh, no! if we have faith at all it is His gift to us; but these trials show us just how weak and undone we are, and that all our strength and sufficiency must come from above. I know some of the brethren, and I suppose you do also, who are even now under very great trials and tribulations because of their faith: and it seems to me that our ministers do suffer the greatest. But Christ is faithful, and will not suffer us to be overcome completely. He has suffered everything before us and is become our great High Priest; and we should call upon him in all things in prayer and supplications.

When we are set upon by our families, friends and even our foes, we are not to fear; for Christ said, "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetop. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Though we have this admonition, there are still many who do not heed it and must suffer the consequences.

When Peter and the other apostles were brought before the council and beaten and threatened and commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, what did they do? They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name and they went forth daily teaching and preaching Christ. Paul was of the same mind and so were many of the Christians of old who were scattered all over the world, but they also went forth teaching and preaching Christ. May God be pleased to enable us to do likewise.

The same sword that has separated us from our own household and from our friends is the same sword that has pricked us in the heart, and has cut to the heart those who would oppose us. This sword is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The ones who are pricked in the heart are those who

hear the word and believe: the ones who hear the word but believe not are they who are cut to the heart and who take council to slay us: they gnash upon us with their teeth as they did Stephen. May the Lord grant that our prayers be as his: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge": for by nature we were the children of wrath even as others. Therefore let us not be hasty to judge those who now oppose us. Did we not oppose this same doctrine which we now defend. When were we given to believe? Early or late in life? Those who oppose the doctrine of Christ may now in the future be one of its most feverish advocates. We should not strive with them, but against their false doctrines. Let us consider Paul; for he was given to us as an example. Paul, or Saul of Tarsus, truly believed he was doing the service of God while yet he was breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples. But on his way to Damascus, with letters of authority to bind and bring to Jerusalem all he found who professed faith in Christ, his persecutions of Christ (The church being the body of Christ) were brought to an abrupt end. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And he said, "Lord, who art thou?" Until that hour Saul did not truly know the One whom he trusted he was serving. So it is with all the children of God. When Peter answered Jesus and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God", Jesus replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Although God chose his children in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world they can not know anything of it until it please the Father. Therefore be not hasty to judge.

This sword, the sword of God, is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged (man made) sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and

spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. "Yea, a sword shall pierce thru thy soul that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." With the thoughts and intents of our hearts brought into the light for us to examine, we must fall back in horror; for they reveal unto us just how corrupt and vile they really are before a just and holy God. Heretofore we had supposed something good about us that we could plead before His Majesty, but now we are made to see that our heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and our whole being, from the top of the head to the sole of the foot, is but wounds, and bruises and putrifying sores. Immediately we turn to the law and seek to justify ourself by our works; but there is no hiding place in this mountain, for our righteousness is as filthy rags unto the one with whom we must plead. Then here again the sword is used to open our eyes that we might see Christ and his righteousness, and that thru his shed blood his righteousness was imputed unto us who are chosen by the Father in Christ before the foundation of the world. By the effectual working of the Holy Spirit we are converted from a state of death to life, from a state of sin to holiness, and from error to the love of truth as it is in our Savior Jesus Christ. Before we were converted we were never disturbed by Satan, for he was content to let us follow our own lusts and pernicious ways: but now he attacks with all the cunning, skill, and fury at his command. He tempts us in many ways as he did the Lord, and causes us to have many doubts and fears that our hope and faith is but imaginary. But with our conversion came faith according to the dispensation of the One who shed his precious blood on the tree of the cross for us. Therefore, above all, take this shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts

of the wicked. Take also the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with prayer and supplication in the Spirit for all saints; and for this poor worm of the dust, that I might ever glorify His holy name and praise Him eternally.

Beloved saints of the Lord, I knew not where to begin, and I know not where to stop, but I have desired to write some of the thoughts, (scattered though they may be,) that have come to my mind concerning these beautiful scriptures; in hope that they may be blessed to the glorifying of His holy name and comforting and edifying to his beloved children.

Pray for me; for the prayers of a just man availeth much.

Clifford Wilbanks

“And the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack.” (Genesis 44:12)

The sons of Jacob had already been down to Egypt for corn, and had left Simeon there bound and in prison. When the corn was gone their father said unto them, “Go again, and buy us a little food.” Judah assured his father that they could not possibly go unless Benjamin accompanied them. Jacob hesitated, for he had lost Joseph, and Benjamin, the only remaining child of his beloved wife Rachel, was very dear to him; but at last he bade them take of the fruit and carry it down to the man as a present. Also said he, Take double money in your hand, and the money that ye brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand, and take Benjamin; and Jacob concluded, “If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”

They returned to Egypt with Benjamin, and when Joseph saw them, he commanded the ruler of his house to slay and make ready, for these men shall dine with me at noon. The brethren were filled with fear because they were brought into Joseph’s house, thinking

that Joseph sought occasion against them. They communed with the steward of Joseph’s house regarding the money that was returned in their sacks, but he said, “Peace be to you! fear not.” When Joseph came home they bowed themselves to him to the earth, and he lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother’s son, and said, “Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.”

Joseph made haste, for his bowels did yearn upon his brother, he sought where to weep, and entered his chamber and wept there. After he had washed his face and refrained himself, he commanded his servants to set on bread. His brethren were then seated before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth; and the men marvelled one at another, and Joseph sent messes unto them from before him, but Benjamin’s mess was five times as much as any of theirs. Then Joseph commanded his steward to fill their sacks with food, as much as they could carry, and to put every man’s money in his sack’s mouth; and to put his silver cup in the sack’s mouth of the youngest, as well as his corn money.

When they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph commanded the steward, “Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?” He overtook them, and spake unto them these words. Then took they down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. The search began at the eldest and left at the youngest, “and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack.”

Here we shall cease to follow the narrative, as our intention is to write of the cup in its spiritual significance; also of the characters with whom this cup is found. Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob, bear him two sons: Joseph first and then Benjamin. Jacob loved Joseph more

than all his sons, and Benjamin, being the youngest, was also greatly beloved, for it is written, Jacob's life was bound up in the lad's life. Joseph was therefore Benjamin's elder brother, and Joseph being a lively type of Christ, Benjamin, to our understanding, is a wonderful type of the church in the gospel dispensation. The steward is the servant of Joseph, and represents the gospel ministers, who are stewards of the manifold grace of God.

It was the steward who ministered to the brethren when in distress over their returned money. He said, "Peace be to you! fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks." He it was also who searched the sacks; he stood in Joseph's stead and spoke the words given him by Joseph. He also declared that they had the divining cup, and they denied it, for the thing was impossible with them. So wherever there are those whose iniquities encompass them around, they stand before their Judge self-condemned, depending entirely upon the mercy of him with whom they have to do. Such, in their confession, deny that they have the cup.

The cup represents the sorrows, travail and separation which Joseph experienced while passing through the afflictions that were his lot according to God's purpose. The cup therefore was a type of the cup of our Lord Jesus Christ. He came down to Egypt of this world where he was crucified, was sold by his brethren, and at Gethsemane he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He fell on his face and prayed, saying, "Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! never-the-less, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

"How bitter that cup, no heart can conceive. Which he drank quite up that sinners might live."

As Joseph partook of his cup, he divined the very things transpiring in his life to be according to the purpose of God revealed to him in the two dreams

given him long ago. It was in a sense of loneliness he partook of that cup. It could not be shared with the Egyptians: he was alone. As our Lord partook of his cup, he divined, and could say, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." He had a full cup. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." This blessed Person is none other than our Elder Brother, though we knew it not. We have seen him pierced, and we mourn for him; when brought into judgement, we expect chains and death, and say, "What shall we speak?" We know not what to say, nor how to clear ourselves.

The brethren on their second visit for corn, dined with Joseph; and it is written, "Joseph made haste, for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there." Whilst here on earth our dear Redeemer ate with publicans and sinners, and his bowels of love yearned over them. Often in the secret chamber of his solitary life, he offered supplication with strong cries and tears for them, and for all his brethren. It is said that Joseph took and sent messes unto all of them from before him, but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of their's.

The least notice or favor of our Lord to a poor sinner, is not according to good works, but according to his love, and love is the fulfilling of the law.

While the brethren representing the Jews received the law, yet Benjamin (the gospel church) received five times as much: which signifies a fulfilled law. With those who are born of the same mother (Jerusalem above) the cup is found. They say it is not in their sack of life, yet they are grieved for the afflictions of Joseph: they are vile, sinful. When they would do good, evil is present with them. This is my cup. Yet when it is shown to them, they tremble,

for they fear it is stolen, that they are taking that which belongs to another. They feel God-forsaken, are fearful of death and offer supplications with strong cries and tears; they hate sin, but find it in their members, and are made to cry out, "Not my will, but thine be done."

As the steward, or preacher, by the Holy Spirit's guidance, searches, the cup is found: and it is in Benjamin's sack; that is, in his who is the smallest and least in the family. There is little Benjamin with their Ruler, partaking of the same cup. "And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders."

The rest of the brethren could return to their father, but Benjamin shall dwell in safety by him. Only in a realizing sense of our own weakness, is there safety, and then we know we have no righteousness; nevertheless our near kinsman Jesus the Lord shall cover us with his righteousness all the day long, and we shall dwell between his shoulders. What a safe place for poor weak sinners: between his shoulders. He carries the lambs in his bosom. It is also written, "The government shall be upon his shoulder." As partakers of his cup, though babes, they yet divine and see things that are hid from the wise and prudent. They clearly discern that holy men of old wrote as moved by the Holy Ghost. To the Jews under the legal covenant, it was not revealed, but it is revealed unto us. In these things we have fellowship with God, and are partakers of his cup. Not one shall come short of his glory, for if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. The father's life was bound up in the life of the child. Jesus, our Elder Brother, is God-man, therefore in him God's life is bound up in our life.

As Joseph made himself known unto his brethren, so does our Lord Jesus make himself known with the glory of a risen Lord, who, like a bridegroom coming out

of his chamber, rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. He showed to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus that his going forth is from the end of heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it. His blessed presence gives joy and gladness; and the five changes of raiment given Benjamin, are but a faint type of the blessed raiment with which, from time to time, his bride, the gospel church is adorned.

Aug., 1923 Elder George Ruston

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

Pursuant to the request of Old Union Primitive Baptist Church Floyd County, VA, a presbytery met April 25, 1981 at Old Union Church for the examination of brother Grover Semones, if found qualified in accordance with the written word of God, at the satisfaction and discretion of their judgement, ordain the above mentioned to the full work of the office of a Deacon.

The solemnity was begun with prayer by Elder William Holland. All Elders of our faith and order present constituted the presbytery. Those present were as follows: Elders William Holland, Amos Hash, Leonard Key, Rufus Brown, Larry Hollandsworth, Noel Conner, Willard Cox, Roy Agee and Hale Terry. Deacons-Tiras Conner, Carl Terry, W. R. Bernard, Nelson Reed, Brammer Nichols, and Donald Agee.

The Presbytery was organized by electing Elder Hale Terry as Moderator and Elder Leonard Key as Clerk. Elders Holland and Agee were chosen to perform the examination of the candidate. Elder Larry Hollandsworth having been duly appointed by Old Union Church in conference April 25, 1981, spokesman for the church delivered brother Grover Semones to the presbytery. Examination was made by Elder Holland and Agee using scripture reference 1st Timothy 3rd Chapter. The presbytery being satisfied with the examination and answers given by the candidate, administered the laying on of hands. The ordination prayer was delivered by Elder Rufus Brown. Elder Amos Hash delivered the charge to the candidate. Scripture reference was 1st Timothy.

The right hand of fellowship and

brotherhood was given. The ordained Deacon was delivered back to the church as an ordained Deacon of Old School, Primitive Baptist Church at Union, Indian Valley, VA.

The minutes consisting of the work of the presbytery were read and adopted. The presbytery was dismissed with prayer by Elder Noel Conner.

Elder Hale Terry, Moderator
Elder Leonard Key, Clerk

SERMON BY ELDER J. P. HELMS
AT THE VIRGINIA
CORRESPONDING MEETING
IN 1959

Brethren and friends I have been enjoying the meeting very much - thankful to be spared to see your faces again, and to see the love and fellowship that is manifest among you. When your Moderator informed me that I would be called on to speak first this morning, I can't find words to describe my feeling, for my very being cried, Impossible: that something is demanded and required of me that is impossible for me to do.

I am before a people I verily believe have been taught of the Lord; and I come before you as the weakest of the weak, and poorest of the poor, with the desire that the Lord of heaven would bless me to bear testimony among his children of the glorious things He has wrought for them, and given them. And what it means to meet together and greet one another as brethren, for often we consider these things lightly. We are all by nature the children of Adam, but we greet each other not as brethren in Adam, but as brethren in the Lord. How this wonderful relationship comes about - the cause of it, and the consequences of it, will at best never be told, but only hinted at.

If there is any scripture resting on my mind more than another at this time, it is, "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God,..." It is the peculiar relationship that exists

between God's people here that I desire to speak about. There is certainly a cause beyond the reach of human hand, or human thought, that brings this relationship about. Here we have affirmed something that is the cause. Why this blessing has been poured out and bestowed upon us, passes our understanding.

When did this love that we are told to behold the manner of, have its beginning? How long has this love of God existed towards you and me? It is spoken of as before the world began. And I affirm that the love which is mentioned in this Book, is God himself, and is the love that we would approach with fear and trembling, and desire grace to behold the manner of.

I believe that before the earth had any being; long before the stars which decorate the high dome of the universe - before they ever came into being, that God loved us; and then, because of that love, he made choice of you and me of the posterity of the first man formed of the dust of the earth; and that never one will be added or one taken away from that choice that He made: because it was in keeping with his own eternal will and purpose.

Often during this meeting, (and on and on), it will be mentioned concerning that which was done in eternity: That God predestinated every one who will ever reach the high clime of eternal glory; that He predestinated us unto the adoption of children: not by our efforts or the efforts of any human, but by the Lord Jesus Christ, He predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son.

Now in this act of God in eternity that set and sealed the destiny in that wonderful work of His, there was a cup for you and for me - a walk laid out for us in such a wonderful way we will never fail nor falter, but will be found walking, living, and abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom, and by whom we serve God acceptably. This glorious blessing was made manifest in New Birth in such

a way that we were made to fear and tremble, and to look upward and call the God of the universe, Our Father. No wonder, then, this writer says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

I know that the finger of scorn is pointed at us; that we are called old fogies; and this and that, but it matters not when we are given grace to consider what we are by the work of God's grace, and all because of the love he had for us; and that He has placed every blessing we will ever receive here, or in the hereafter, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the Lord of glory was made manifest and laid in the manger; and given to you and to me.

When we talk about the Gift of God: what it is, how it is? It is all contained in our Lord, our Elder Brother, who came down and took upon himself our flesh in a wonderful way, and was made a sin-bearer for us: "Behold", indeed, "what manner of love", is this that caused him to lay his head low with the beasts of the stall, yet came with the power with which he made the world. We hear today that He needs help, that he can be hindered, and all this: Away with such untruth!

I stand before witnesses this morning who know something. Though we are called "hope" folks, I want to say that we are the only folks who do know anything. For there are two things that we know: that we are sinners, and that there is only one Saviour, and who He is. You have been taught not by men; for, as with the apostle, we learned it not of man, neither were taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. That is God's gift to you. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us": his own self in the person of his Son. That is what it means: That he gave Jesus not a Saviour of the whole world, but the Saviour of His children, his people; and He came down to be with them.

And so, he has become our brother. Such a wonderful thing is too much for words; too much for us to lay hold of, or to comprehend: It has to be revealed to us, and wrought in us in such a way that we are made to know that we are sinners; and that there is only one Saviour, whose arm is never shortened that he cannot reach the worst case: There is no place too far for him; there is no case too hard for him.

They talk about taking little children when they are infants and putting them in the Cradle Roll, and bringing them up step by step; and of a man getting so old that he has passed the day of grace. Away with such an untruth! I tell you that the love God gave his children, reaches the infant's case, and the old man's and old woman's case. It doesn't make any difference as to age or condition, color or clime, where this love has been given them in eternity, it will be made manifest to them here.

The first thing that is ever made manifest to them, is their condition before a just and holy God. I stood by the bank of a stream and saw my mother immersed into the Old Baptist Church when I was five years old and was seven when my father united with the church. I was born and reared among the Old Baptists, and respected them as honest and honorable people, but there was a thought in me, (and it grew as I grew), that our destiny was in our own hands: that we could work ourselves into the favor of the most high God: I thought it was all in our hands. Talk about Arinianism, I had a full dose of it: It was born in me. Don't tell me you are an Old Baptist because your father or mother was one; I know better than that. I was everything in the world but a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ: I believed in Helms; that he could work himself into the favor of God, and receive every gift for what he did. But, Lo! the difference:

In the seventeenth year of my life, (and if it were not for these things you

would not be my brethren, and this would not be a home for me), in the night time, I saw something. It appeared in the East, and there was a light which no man's eyes could penetrate: and there was a Being in it. And a voice came out of that light - and the graves gave up their dead, and behold, there were only sheep and goats: and I was a goat. I awoke with a prayer for mercy, and tears of sorrow in my eyes, because it was here I found that I was a sinner - a condemned sinner in the sight of God. For seventeen years no man ever undertook more than I to get right with God.

Sometimes I boasted that I had conquered this old flesh: I had laid this thing down, and taken up that. But then I would fall and become ten times worse. I remember, (because profanity was one of the worst things that ever tormented me), that I quit profanity for three months; and I began to look at myself that I was getting better. Then, as I was walking along, I stubbed my toe on a stone: I threw my hat down and stamped it into the ground, and more profanity than ever I had thought of rolled out of me. Then it was that I fell down deeper and deeper. Talk about a man climbing upward, I want to tell you that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. When you walk in these things, you go down, down, unless this that God gave - not offered, in the person of Jesus Christ, is for you.

In my thirty-fourth year, everything had failed: I had sinned away the day of grace; I had gone beyond the reach of God's mercy. But my hope is that He came to a cabin home, and spoke words of life, and brought life and light unto a poor sinner, and raised him up. I was lying on a stone hearth, and he raised me up, and for a few minutes there was no doubt but that He loved me, and that he had given himself for me; for he affirmed to me that, "I made heaven and earth, and I am your Saviour." I walked out of that cabin, and behold everything

was perfectly attuned to the praise of the glory of God, who had borne my sins in his own body; died for me upon the cross; and was raised for my justification. He has not left us comfortless, but is with us day after day, and night after night. This is the love of God that passes all understanding. The Lord of glory has done all of this for us.

Then the thought is, if he has done all of this for us, what do we do? I tell you one thing; his children love him. Why do they love him? Because he first loved them, that is why. Do we love one another? Yes; because God has begotten us again and has implanted the love of the brethren in us. Can you keep from loving your father and mother? You can't do it; neither can you keep from loving your brethren in the Lord.

I did not have to learn to love Old Baptists. I thought one time they were the ugliest folks I ever saw, and that every old ugly man and woman in the country joined the Old Baptist Church. But, Lo, something took place! I went to church after this memorable occasion, and I saw them as I had never seen them before: They looked so different - I knew their faces all right, but I saw something shining in their countenances, and they had a different appearance: and I just loved them. I couldn't help it - and I didn't try to help it either.

So what do we do for him? He puts something in us that causes a work. Don't tell me that you won't praise him: Don't tell me that you won't thank him. When he takes you up out of an horrible pit and places your feet upon a rock, and puts a new song in your mouth, don't tell me you won't sing. But when you do all of this, I don't want to hear anyone tell what they have done for the Lord, for when he gives you grace to sing his praise, and when he gives this old sinner grace to testify in his courts, it is a wonderful thing that he does. Preaching is the easiest thing in the world when God gives you something to preach, but it is the hardest thing in the world to try

to preach.

God does everything for his people: He gives them faith. "The life which I now, live in the flesh", said the apostle, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." So we work by faith through grace that is given us, and we don't claim praise for ourselves, but for Him from whom all blessings come.

The whole thing is stated briefly, "If Christ be in you." If Christ be not in you, you are none of his; you are not akin to him, and you dare not call him brother, or king, nor mention his name, if he is not in you. If He is not in you, you are dead, but when he who is our life appears, then we also appear with him in glory.

If God opens the windows of heaven and feeds you a little bit, you won't go from this association praising these elders who preached; you will go home praising the Lord. "The Lord has done great things for us whereof we are glad." So, "Behold what manner of love." You can't explain why you love your companion; much more, ten thousand times more, the love of God that was given in Christ Jesus. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us," - not offered it to us; not put it somewhere that we have to go to get it, but bestowed upon us. Does it go back to the morning of time? yes, to that one who offered a more acceptable sacrifice than his brother. It reaches on down - it is the same grace; it is the same gift you receive that was given to Elijah of old and those prophets who by faith were imprisoned, or put to death.

I know that we say sometimes that if we had the same evidence that sister or brother so and so has, we would not doubt any more. But if you ever get without doubt, you lose the most precious thing in the world. When you get to the place that you know too much, you can't call a poor old sinner like me brother. And when it comes to the place we can't call each other brethren in the

Lord, we are in a terrible condition. It is your weakness and your failings, that, in some wonderful way, I have fellowship for; I have fellowship for your sufferings; I have fellowship for your doubts; I have fellowship for your fears; I have fellowship for your staggerings, and you can't walk to suit yourself. I have fellowship when you can't control your tongue; because that is me! It takes the grace of God to straighten my walk; to control my tongue, and make me live right and do right here in the world. So I haven't a thing in the world to boast of. Only when I glory, may I glory in the Lord.

He's done everything and brought this relationship about. You can't get it by joining the church; you can't get it by baptism, and you can't get it by praying or singing. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This is the only way that you can come into this family of our God: By being born again of incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth forever.

The whole posterity of Adam was in his loins, and Adam was a figure of him that was to come. And I tell you, children, that the incorruptible seed that is mentioned in the scripture quoted, was in the Lord Jesus Christ in eternity; and everyone that is born again, is born of that seed; and heaven is their home. Nothing can ever be brought against you, for in a wonderful sense, you are already there. The only way we can know them in this world, is that there is something perceived in them that is a mystery to the world. I may never have heard you speak, or sing, or mention these things, but there is something in your face that you can't hide.

I have talked longer than I thought possible. May the Lord keep you, and give your grace that you may realize more and more how dependent you are upon him; and how sure it is that He will supply all your needs.

FIFTH SUNDAY MEETING
MOONS CREEK PRIMITIVE
BAPTIST CHURCH

The Lord willing, a fifth Sunday meeting will be held with Moons Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Sunday, November 29, 1981, beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Moons Creek is located approximately one mile off Highway #86, midway between Danville, Va., and Yanceyville, N.C., in Caswell Co.

The meeting, though being held at Moons Creek, will be participated in by a number of other independent churches.

An invitation is extended to ministers, brethren, and friends to meet with us.

Elder Kenneth Key, Pastor
Moons Creek Church

Dear Sirs:

A few thoughts came to me on Hebrews 11:1 while I was reading, and I decided to write them to the *Signs* hoping someone may get a little comfort from them. After reading, do with them as it pleases you. It will be fine with me.

Hebrews 11:1 said, "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*" Now when you first think about this thing it sounds almost impossible; "The evidence of things not seen". Most of the time it is hard to get evidence of things seen, of things that happen here in this life on a regular basis, but here we are talking or thinking about evidence of things not seen. But what are we really talking about here? Why, faith. Faith is the subject under consideration; God given faith, if you please. For the scripture says, "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourself, it is a gift of God". This faith we are thinking about, according to scripture, and as all believers know, is a gift of God. It is God given faith.

I am not writing this to ridicule, or

condemn the belief of others, but I certainly don't mind comparing some differences between their belief and mine, between the right and the wrong, the fake and the true. The Arminian world will say "Oh, you got to have faith", and we know the scripture says "without faith it is impossible to please God". So we also say that you have to have faith, but they say and think that all one has to do is reach out and get faith, as if it were fruit hanging on a tree, and anyone who would put forth a little effort could get this faith; the more effort, the more faith. But we know it doesn't come that way. I am writing about the faith that God's people have, something that is a gift of God; "The evidence of things not seen". Oh, the countless examples of things we could recall about faith being the evidence of things not seen.

Speaking in a natural way and of natural things, if we went out and bought a car we would be given a title signed in our name. That title would be evidence of our buying and paying for that car. If we bought a home we would be given a deed, in the same manner that deed would prove our ownership of that property. In the courts of our land, the law requires evidence of our being guilty, either with a written document or eye witness; evidence, if you please, to prove a man guilty, or as the case may be, innocent. But these are all examples of natural things as they deal with the material world in which we live, and these things we see or hear about daily. But now we want to consider the word "evidence" as it applies to a believer, in things pertaining to belief, doctrine, and the God in whom we hope and trust we believe, the Great I Am, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Saviour of all who will ever sing the song of redemption in that great and wonderful home prepared by God for His people.

I have written about things seen, now let us consider a few things not seen of

which there are many in the scriptures. Hebrews Chapter 11, "By faith Noah built an ark...." Now as everyone knows, an ark is something like a boat, something that floats on water. Now where did he build this ark? At the water? Oh, no! Noah built this ark on dry ground. And what was the purpose of building this ark? Why, to save him and his family from an awful flood; a flood such as no one living had ever seen. Think how utterly ridiculous and how foolish it must have looked to all the people who saw and heard about it. All these people couldn't see any reason for building an ark. They couldn't see any flood coming. Then we must ask; could Noah see it? Or we ask, how did Noah see it? Why, by faith, of course. Scripture says "By faith" (God given faith) "Noah built an ark". Now is this not the evidence of things not seen?

Now let us think for a minute about Abraham. Remember that after Sarah was past normal child-bearing age, God promised Abraham a son by Sarah. In connection with this promise, God promised Abraham that he would have many seed. Now this seed was to be through the lineage or descendants of this son, Isaac. Now we know that all of God's promises are true and faithful. We know that these things come to pass, because God promised them. God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on the altar, but we would say, "Wait, he can't do that, because if he does that, what will happen to all these promises?" Right, we can't see how this could happen. Now let me ask this one question - Could Abraham see? I believe Abraham believed God; the scriptures say so. See where it says in the scriptures that "Abraham by faith.....". This is the thing I am writing about, "The evidence of things not seen".

Now concerning this portion of scripture, there is much food and many wonderful truths contained therein that at this time I will not try to write about, because now I am thinking of faith,

"evidence of things not seen". But one thing I would like to mention here before moving on. The thing Abraham did here was something wonderful, a great and wonderful thing. He was a man far greater than I could ever hope to be. But before God, Abraham had nothing to boast in. Remember Abraham did this thing by faith. This faith he had was a gift of God, not something he attained by his own effort, and all who have this faith are not proud and boastful, but humble; those who know within their very being where their help comes from.

Now let us look at this verse, Heb. 11:1, and apply it to ourselves today. II Tim. 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine...". Since scripture is profitable for doctrine, let us consider our doctrine with this scripture. Do you believe in a sovereign God who works all things after the counsel of His own will, one who speaks and it is done; works in His children both the "will and to do of his good pleasure", one who speaks of His children in this manner, "Those whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate;" "Moreover, whom he did predestinate them he also called", and "Whom he called them he also justified", and glorified. I say if you believe this you have the God-given faith that is "the evidence of things not seen". For we know that the great masses of people in the world today who called themselves believers or christians, don't believe this. They can't see salvation by grace even as plain as it is written in the Bible, and you can't show them these things. How well I know that they are blind about seeing this, even as the people who couldn't see the need of an ark in the days when Noah was building it. In discussing the scriptures with close friends or relatives, I can't show them these things. Any more I don't even try. However, I don't hesitate to defend my belief. But how well I remember when this doctrine was terrible in my sight, but I verily believe

the truth of this doctrine was made sweet to me in such a way that now there is no doubt in my breast but this is the true doctrine. But even as clear and plain as it is to some, it is hidden and repulsive to others. I believe it takes God-given faith, "the evidence of things not seen" to be able to know the sweetness of the doctrine of salvation by grace.

A brother, I hope,
Frank Hunt

SPRINGTIME

I have a little secret,
That I would like to share.
Perhaps you'd like to hear it;
It's something like a prayer.
It's just about the springtime
That means so much to me.
Have you been so busy
That you have failed to see?
The red buds on the hill side;
The dogwoods and the flowers;
The carpet of green grass, the lilacs,
They really form a bower.
Have you heard the robins?
And the mockingbirds at night?
They are telling us, "God is in His heaven,
Cheer up! Will be all right."
Then, why should we feel so discouraged?
Downhearted and blue,
When God is proving His love to us
Though we doubt and worry so!
He proves his love to us
Though we doubt and worry so.
Let's praise Him for His wonderful work
And for the beauty of the earth.

Written by Evelyn Vories

My dear Elder Tench:

We, the brethren and friends of Weatherford Church and brethren and friends of sister churches have gathered together at the invitation of Weatherford Church to thank God for his many blessings; and with the particular thought in mind of the new meeting house Weatherford Church has been blessed to build and call her own,

now free and clear from the mortgage of man, we thank God. A brother has asked me to write something to you for this occasion.

So many blessings are represented here today. Each of us can look into our lives and find precious occasions, or events, or trails, that make us thank God for giving us or delivering us from. The dear Lord willing, I would like to tell you of a few pictures I have.

The first is a man, his wife and two small girls. The mother tells the little girls they are going to church and would "Ford the creek."

The second is a young girl who was ashamed when her mother asked the preacher to excuse the girl who wanted to go to a ball game.

The third is a young girl meeting her mother at the front door to learn how many places to set for dinner. As the mother rushed in to take off her hat she said to her husband, "I declare, I believe he's improving."

The fourth is a girl who sits in church beside her mother and says little.

The fifth is a minister who has traveled many miles to visit the lady sitting in the wheel chair.

The sixth is a young woman as she stands outside a church, three dear ones have asked for a home with the church.

The seventh is a baptizing.

Elder Tench, do you see yourself in any of these pictures?

You have baptized many of us who sit here today. You know, we love to hear Elder Plybon tell us of his experience and he gives us several dates. I love to tell that I was baptized the 4th Sunday in April, 1968, in a little creek around the road from Weatherford Church, with three dear ones. Elder Ingram spoke from Gen. 1:1 when we were back in the meeting house for services.

Looking at these pictures in reverse order, I see you in the sixth one. As I stood speaking to Sister Williams who was happy that three had come to church, you spoke to me about coming to

the church. I think I made no reply, my tongue not yet loosened. To this day I thank the dear Lord for encouragement from you and other dear ones. I do not think any encouragement persuaded me into the church, but all encouragement was soothing to a troubled soul.

And you were the minister in the fifth picture. You came to see my mother when she was no longer able to attend services. Many of us have pictures of this kind.

The fourth picture is the sad one but I believe "must needs be." Yes, Brother Tench, you are certainly in that one. For twenty years my eyes were cast down in burning shame and fear. I just kept wanting to hear that the Lord came into the world to save sinners; and then, was I one that He came to save? And I always loved to hear you pray. I'll try to move along to the next picture.

The third picture. I like this one very much. It's very special. It's revelation. I believe it was before I came to know myself as the sinner. I'm very sure the words were somewhere with me and only given to me years after hearing them. I believe my mother was happy, encouraged, thankful, that the dear Lord she loved had sent you to pastor her church. I just see so much in those words, "I declare, I believe he's improving."

The only thing I can say about the second picture is I hope the dear Lord had started a good work in me. I don't know. I know I've thought of that often. And I can't say much about the first picture except I have it and I believe it was to Weatherford Church we were going. To me it's just a good picture to look upon.

Brother Tench, with each of these pictures, most every one here can tell you of a similar picture, a similar experience. As we come to thank God for our blessings, we would thank Him for you, our Pastor. May He bless us and keep us in His love.

I am told that Weatherford Church called you as her pastor in 1938. The original meeting house was built in 1879 just across the road from the present site.

If the brother who asked I write something wishes to give you these words, he may; if not, that will be all right too. As I write I hope the Lord has blessed me with these words because I have used His name.

With love I hope,
Reidy Pickral

May, 1981

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER

Dear Editors of the Signs,

I did so much enjoy the articles about Elder Beebe. I have read many of his writings and enjoyed them so much. He seemed so deep and settled in his belief and defended it all the way through. I believe that he will always be remembered among the Old Baptists everywhere. He must have had a rough travel at the time when the Missionary came in to cause divisions among them.

It brings to mind the troubles Paul went through with the Galatians when some came in unawares and told them they must be circumcised and live under Moses' law. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" Gal. 3:3. "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Gal. 4:9 But now after that ye have known God or rather are known of God how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Paul explained all over again that the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith (3:25) "But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster".

(3:26) "For ye are all the children

of God by faith in Christ Jesus". Then he goes on to explain in Gal. 4:21 "Tell me ye who desire to be under the law do ye not hear the law. For it is written that Abraham had two sons. The one by a bondmaid; the other by a free woman. He who was born of the bond woman was born after the flesh but he of the free woman was by promise. And these are the two covenants. The bondwoman and her son are in bondage - but the son of the free woman is the child of promise. Paul says in Gal. 4:28, "Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise". Read the whole book of Galatians. It explains it all.

Now some report that we are saying "Do evil so good will come of it", but God's children know better because they wish with all their hearts to do good and suffer much because they know not how to perform that which is good. They desire the law of God after the inward man so Paul says in Rom. 7:23, "But I see another law in my members waring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members"; making them to cry "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death". Then he answered his own question with "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God but with the flesh the law of sin." (Rom. 7:14) We know that the law is spiritual but I am carnal, sold under sin, for that which I do I allow not. What I would that I do not, but what I hate that I do. For we hate the sin that so easly besets us and look forward to the time when we can be rid of it. For here we only see in part, just small glimpses of our future life but when our time in this life is past then we won't sin any more and this is our hope. Now is this doing evil so good will come of it?

romans 7:16 "If then I do that which I would not I consent unto the law that it is good." Romans 7:19 "For I know that

in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Paul said that God gave him a thorn in the flesh and he asked God to remove it. His answer from God was, "My grace is sufficient for thee", and that it was a messenger of Satan to buffet him to keep him from being too highly exalted.

I believe in predestination of all things. God gives us what we need and when we need it. Even the chastenings are given to us because He loves us. He is the Potter and we are the clay, and He can do with us whatever He pleases. He made all things to serve the purpose He wanted it to serve.

I hadn't meant to write so much but these things came to my mind. I believe that for God's chosen elect people that Christ has already paid their debt to God for Heb. 10:14 says, "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified". I hope that I am among these.

In hope,
Mrs. Eugene Mathews

PLEASANT VALLEY Association

The thirty-fifth annual session of the Pleasant Valley Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Shepherd Fold Church, Houston, Texas commencing on Friday before, and continuing through the first Sunday in November 1981. (30 and 31 October and 1 November)

For additional information contact Elder G. D. Shipman, Route 2 Box 128, Von Ormy, Texas 78073 or in the Houston Area, call Sister Robbie Holloway (Telephone 713-453-8846).

Elder G. D. Shipman, Clerk

FIFTH SUNDAY MEETING

The Lord willing, there will be a Fifth Sunday Meeting at the Snow Hill Old School Baptist Church, Snow Hill, Maryland, on November 29, 1981. Elder J.R. Williams, Keeling, Virginia, is to be the guest minister.

We invite all lovers of the truth to be with us for this meeting.

Elder J. F. Poole, Pastor

Dear Editors of the Signs,

Enclosed please find a check to be used as you think best. I enjoy reading the paper so much, especially the May, 1981 issue.

Wishing you Editors the best and may God help you to keep it coming to everyone, especially to the older ones who are not able to go to church.

With my best wishes,
Maggie Culp

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OBITUARIES

LENA HUTCHINS NEAL

Mrs. Lena Hutchins Neal, daughter of John Wesley Hutchins and Charlotte Tempie Hutchins, was born in Patrick County, Virginia, July 24, 1889, and departed this life on August 5, 1980, making her stay on this earth 91 years and 12 days.

She was married to Irving Euster Neal January 15, 1907. She was survived by a granddaughter, Betsy Walker Preston and three great grandchildren of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and a host of friends who loved her. We all miss her but feel she is with her dear ones.

She united with Tate Street Primitive Baptist Church of Greensboro in August 1917. She was a faithful member and never missed until illness kept her away, but she loved her church dearly.

She was Clerk and Treasurer from 1943-1967 of this church. She took over when her beloved husband passed. Ill health caused her to give it up, but served well.

Her funeral was conducted at Lambeth Troxler Funeral Chapel by Elder Kenneth R. Key. Her body was laid to rest in Forest Lawn Cemetery to await the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

May God's blessings be upon all who mourn her departure feeling she had fought a good fight and finished her course, and now sweetly rests awaiting to be made life unto her precious Savior, and to her gathered home where she can see her Savior Jesus Christ and be like Him, where sickness, sorrow, and death can never come.

Written By Clara Lee Word

ELDER EUGENE B. AULT

Elder Eugene B. Ault passed from this life on December 8, 1980 at the nursing home at

Weslaco, Texas, at the age of 92 (born 29 April 1888 at San Marcos, Texas). Surviving him were his wife, Sister Opal Ault; two daughters: Mrs. Alyne Little and Mrs. Gordan Boothe; three sons: Irving, Herbert, and Robert Ault; two step daughters: Mrs. Della Hansel and Sister Gwen Kilby; one step son: Henry Johnson; one sister: Mrs. Corina Nation; one brother: Brother Allie B. Ault; and five grandchildren, 29 great grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren.

Elder Ault joined a Primitive Baptist church sometime before March 1921 (no record). As on this date, Mount Zion Church was constituted at Calallen, Texas and Brother Ault was a charter member. In February 1924, Mount Zion Church was moved to Weslaco, Texas in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Elder Ault served this church as either clerk or pastor for nearly 60 years. Brother Ault attended Mount Zion Primitive Baptist Association at Graham, Texas in August 1921 and has attended many associations since that time. He preached in the San Marcos Association between 1929 and 1931 (only record available). Also, he served as clerk of the association. Brother Eugene B. Ault was ordained to the full work of Gospel Ministry on 28 January 1937 at Mount Zion Church with Elders J. B. Bowden, W. H. Tatum, and J. B. Reid; and Deacon J. W. Culpepper forming the presbytery. In the fall of 1937, Elder Ault was called as co pastor with Elder J. B. Bowden of Mount Olive Church at Stockdale, Texas. He served this church until January 1960 when he requested his release from being pastor so younger elders whom lived in the area could be called. He also served as clerk of the Pleasant Valley Association between 1957 and 1964, stepping down because of age.

Elder Ault was always faithful to attend to the churches he served. He was not considered a powerful preacher but how sweet he spoke of the things he had experienced here and the things that Jesus had done for poor sinners. Little Children in the Lord did love the milk feeding that was provided by God through this Dear Elder. He preached a powerful God that did all His pleasures and a Darling Son Who did all the saving. Just as Jesus loved His Bride, this Elder's heart was full of love for everyone.

Brother Ault helped many different individuals naturally with his money, goods, etc. or if they were having trouble with their health he would provide for their need. There is no telling how much of this worldly goods that this dear one gave away.

Graveside service was held by his pastor, Elder W. M. Burkhalter and he was laid to rest in the Weslaco City Cemetery to await the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Elder Ault's hope was in the resurrection of the dead and to be housed in Heaven and Immortal Glory with the Savior.

Written by one who loved him,
Gerald D. Shipman

IN MEMORIAM

Once again we have been made to feel that one of Gods chosen children has been called to the home prepared for him.

Walter Claude Tucker was born to Elder Luther T. and Lillie Shelton Tucker, in October 1909 in Stokes County, North Carolina.

He was united in marriage with Mary Nelson, of Patrick County, Virginia on October 19, 1930; Residing at Walker town, N.C. until moving to Clemmons N.C. in 1936. He was employed by R.J. Reynolds in Winston Salem for forty-five years, retiring on disability in 1972.

Brother Walter had been a member of Hillsdale Primitive Baptist Church near Summerfield, N.C., for over twenty years. Though he had a great distance to travel to attend church, he remained a faithful member as long as his health permitted. His condition had grown steadily worse, and though no longer able to attend services, he still proclaimed the mercies of God.

The fellowship of his brothers and sisters in the faith was so dear to him. An humble man, he often remarked on his own unworthiness that God should take notice of him, but felt a divine hope had been given of that blessed kingdom, that can only come from the kind hand of Almighty God. He believed firmly in the doctrine of salvation by Grace. There have been many evidences of this belief through many years of close friendship with the Tucker family. He was a good husband, a kind father, and a good friend to all who knew him.

Brother Tucker departed this earthly life

October 3, 1980. Surviving are his wife, Sister Mary Nelson Tucker, five children: Marie Pegram, Doris Tucker, Betty Huff of Clemmons, N.C., Jerry Tucker of Morristown, Tenn., Jim Tucker of the home, and eight grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted at Hayworth-Miller Chapel in Winston-Salem, N.C. by his pastor, Elder B. D. Hutchens, Jr. He was laid to rest at Clemmons Memorial Gardens, where he awaits to hear the call, "Come Ye blest of my Father, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world."

Though hearts are heavy by his absence, we believe to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, for those who die in Him.

We hope our prayer can be, to make us ever submissive to God's will in all things.

Written by a friend in Christ, (I hope)
Mary C. Knight

SISTER BESSIE LANGDON

God called from our midst Sister Bessie Langdon on February 16, 1981. She was blessed to live 93 years.

Sister Langdon was a member of Bethsada Primitive Baptist Church for many years before she united with Liberty Primitive Baptist Church about 14 years ago. She had been in declining health for several years, but attended services when able.

Funeral services were held at Rose Funeral Home Chapel with Elder C. D. Turner officiating. Burial was in Bethsada Church Cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to wait the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to be forever satisfied.

Surviving are five daughters, Mrs. Bertha Byrd, and Mrs. Ollie Renny, of Benson, N.C., Mrs. Nora Jones of Durham, N.C., Mrs. Myrtle Broylin, of Hope Mills, N.C., Mrs. Geraldine Stewart, of Buies Creek, N.C.; 6 sons, Talmadge Langdom of Rome, Ga., Alvis, Jarvis, Ralph, Ernest, and Roy Langdon all of Fayetteville, North Carolina; two sisters, Mrs. Vado Hardee, of sons, Talmadge Langdon all of Fayetteville, N.C.; two sisters, Mrs. Vado Hardee, of Benson, N.C., Mrs. Gladys Lassiter, of Smithfield, N.C., 29 grandchildren; 45 great grandchildren, and 15 great-great

grandchildren.

May God bless and keep her loved ones in our prayers for Christ's sake.

We agree to send a copy to the family; one for church record and one to the *Signs of the Times* for publication.

Committee; Brother James Young
Sister Dorothy Barefoot
Sister Bessie Hall

JASPER CALK

Dear Editors of the *Signs of the Times*,

Since reading the letters Jasper Calk wrote and received to and from Elder Rhodes and Elder Lambert, I should like the readers to know of his death.

Death came at 9:30 A.M. Sunday, March 9, 1980 in St. Francis Hospital, Monroe, La. His funeral was held in Kilpatrick Funeral Home Chapel at 10:30 A.M. on Tuesday with Elder David E. Turner officiating. He was laid to rest in Riverview Cemetery beside his wife who had preceeded him in death, to await the resurrection morning to be raised up to meet the Lord in the air.

His survivors are one son, Iven Calk, Monroe, La., one brother, James D. Calk of Hamilton, Texas, and one sister, Eric C. Thurston of Downsville, La; also nine grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

Up to this point the writer was his precious sister, not only in the natural but also in the spiritual world. After hearing and having known Brother Calk about thirty years, we became real close. I read the letter Brother Calk wrote Elder Lambert on March 28, 1954, and has recently been published in the *Signs*, May, 1980 issue.

Now as I think about it, my mind goes to the 40th chapter of Psalms. I can see his experience in these few scriptures. "I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

I believe this scripture fits his experience in 1916 in Texas when he felt to be brought up out of the horrible pit by the great God of the world. I believe also this next scripture

which will be found in First Peter in the first five verses, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time". This is the spiritual inheritance of all of God's humble children through the precious blood of the Lamb. Yes, Christ was and is his hope in the deeper sense, which he has an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast.

Written by
Sister Eric C. Thurston
and
Elder David E. Turner

MELBA COBB VAUGHN

It has pleased the God of grace and mercy to call from this earth a beloved sister, Melba Cobb Vaughn. She fell quietly to sleep in Jesus on February 26, 1981. Her voice is stilled but not forgotten. Her presence among the Baptist will long be remembered. She was kind, tenderhearted, thoughtful of others and would carry as many as she could to meeting when she was blessed to go.

Sister Vaughn loved to talk on spiritual things. One of her favorite scriptures was Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." She suffered many afflictions and bore them with patience and a smile.

Sister Melba Cobb Vaughn was born September 20, 1912, in Caswell County, N.C., the daughter of Joe Dill and Sallie French Cobb. She was married to Earl C. Vaughn and moved to Anson County, N.C., living there approximately 31 years prior to her death.

She was a patient at McCain Sanitorium,

McCain, N.C., for tuberculosis for many years. After she returned home she called for the membership of Lawyer's Springs Church, Marshville, N.C. on January 24, 1953, to come to her home to have meeting there. It was at this time that she offered to the church; but, due to her physical health, she could not be baptized at that time. On the third Sunday in February, 1954, she was baptized into full fellowship of Lawyer's Springs Church. In the beginning neither her doctor nor her husband were willing for here to go into the water. They did not realize how she had been made to love her God and Creator. Sister Vaughn loved Lawyer's Springs Church and often remarked how good they (the previous members) were to her, including her pastor and his dear companion, Elder James T. and Sister Floy Jones. We never saw anyone more devoted to her church than she was, and also we have never seen a church more devoted to a member than they were to her.

Left to mourn her passing (with her church) are her family, relatives and friends. These include her husband, Earl C. Vaughn, Route 5, Wadesboro, N.C., one son, William Jackson, Reidsville, N.C.; one sister, Sister Rena Cobb Smith, Reidsville; brothers, Floyd Cobb of Newport News, Va., Clifford and Fred of Ruffin, N.C.; Johnnie Cobb, Reidsville, and two grandchildren, Cindy and Dickie Cobb.

Her funeral service was held at Moore's Funeral Home, Wadesboro, N.C., by her pastor, Elder James T. Jones, and Elder W. C. Edwards. Then her body was brought to Wilkerson Funeral Home, Reidsville, to lie in state, after which it was taken to Pleasant Grove Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery, Caswell County, N.C., for interment where graveside services were conducted by Elder Donald Smith, pastor of Pleasant Grove Primitive Baptist Church, and Pastor Harold Townsend. It was her request for her mortal body to be laid to rest at this church site.

"Asleep in Jesus! blessed sleep.

From which none ever wake to weep!

A calm and undisturbed repose,

Unbroken by the last of foes."

Written at the request of Lawyer's Springs Church, Marshville, N.C., by one who loved her dearly.

Mrs. Fred (Louise) Cobb

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

THE EARLY RELIGIOUS LIFE OF
ELDER DAVID BARTLEY
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

(CONTINUED)

Our senior surgeon was Dr. Edgar, a stranger to me, who, at the time of my enlistment in the hospital service with him, had promised me leave of absence in March, to go home and settle an estate as administrator, on which condition I had enlisted; but he was deaf to both his promise and my almost dying condition, for he coldly refused every appeal to grant me a sick furlough, and would not let me go home. Although he knew my extreme disabilities, which should have moved him to compassion, yet he rudely told me that I should rather leave my bones bleaching on the field of battle than to want to go home before the rebellion was put down. Turning from him, I then applied to the commander of the regiment, Col. Ross, a humane man and a Christian, I trust, who kindly did all in his power to have me sent away where I could be cared for; but every effort failed, for General Grant's order was rigid that no one should be permitted to pass through the lines on leave of absence, except he had a sick furlough from the regimental surgeon. As a last effort, the noble Col. Ross sent a written appeal in my behalf to Gen. Grant himself, but received no answer. Hope now died in my heart, and I sorrowfully felt that I should not be permitted to see my family and kindred, brethren and friends again. While this was painfully trying, I felt that I had brought it all upon myself and could not murmur against the Lord

for it.

As the hard-hearted Pharoah would not let the Children of Israel go, so did my case appear as deplorable as theirs, and there was no escape from my bitter afflictions and cruel bondage--only death.

CHAPTER XI DELIVERED

On a cold and rainy day an order came that we should put up three days rations in our haversacks, and be ready to strike our tents and embark late that evening to sail up the river; but later a second order came that we could retire and sleep about two hours, and that we would be called up to go on board the boats about midnight to run up to Pittsburg Landing, where a great battle was to be fought. To me this was as a summons unto my speedy death.

In the evening the rain was succeeded by a heavy snow-storm, which continued until late in the night. I was so much debilitated that I would become sick and faint at times, and have to lie down on the wet ground to rest. About 8 o'clock at night, while slowly making my way back to my dismal tent, and meditating the fearful perils which shut me in, a peaceful feeling of resignation and quiet trust filled my heart, and in mind I took a tender leave of all at home, confident that I should not live to return and see them; but was comforted with the heavenly assurance that, although I must die thus painfully, yet the Lord would receive me to Himself, and all my sufferings and sorrows should be ended forever.

But before reaching my tent my mind was impressed with a desire to go beyond it to Col. Ross's office-tent, and see if it was possible for him to send me away that night; but my second thought was that it could avail nothing and would annoy him, and I tried to repress this desire; yet it had taken such possession of my mind that I passively walked on, and the guard passed me in

the tent. The colonel kindly saluted me, asked me to be seated and warm myself before the cheerful fireplace, and inquired how I felt. His kindness gave me courage to say: "Colonel, I am worse and growing weaker. If I have to go up on this campaign, and be exposed to the weather and the hardships of the camp, I could be of no service, but would only be in the way, and could not survive long". "I know it, doctor", he replied. "You should have been sent away to a hospital some time ago, but you know every effort has failed". I answered: "Colonel, can't you think of any possible way to send me away?" He paused, then said: "I this moment think of one way; if it fails, then there is no chance. This afternoon three sick soldiers were sent from our regiment on board the steamer *Tigress*, to go down to a general hospital in Paducah. If you could get Dr. Edgar to detail you as a nurse for them, you could there get a sick furlough to go home". I quickly asked: "Colonel, can't you do it? It would be useless for me to appeal to Dr. Edgar, and I can't do so". He answered: "You know the army regulations and that it would be against the rules, for this authority belongs to him". "Yes, I know, colonel; but then, you are the higher in authority than he is, and will you not take the responsibility?" Dropping his head a moment, he raised it and smilingly said, "I will. If I can't give you a sick furlough to go home, I will do the next best thing--send you where you can get one". He quickly wrote the order, detailing me as a nurse for the three sick soldiers from our regiment on board the *Tigress*; also stating that I was sick and should be sent home--and he laughed at the idea of sending me as a nurse, remarking that I needed a nurse more than they, no doubt. He told me to take the order to the adjutant's tent and have it recorded, saying that I would have to hurry or I might be too late, as it would soon be time for the *Tigress* to start.

Inspired with renewed spirit and

hope, I did hurry; for the possibility of returning to home and life again quickened my movements, and lifted me above my suffering and weakness. Hastily making ready my valise and roll of bedding, the good-bys were quickly taken, and I set out for the river, a half-mile or more away, the darkness lighted only by the fast-falling snow, which had covered the ground with a white sheet--wondering the while whether there would be any one at that late hour to set me across the first great bayou, a fourth of a mile wide, perhaps. Just as I reached its bank, lo! John Bartley, a soldier from Alton, Ill., whose division was camped on the island beyond, was pushing off his skiff from shore. By the light of his lantern I knew him--having met him before and ascertained that we were fourth cousins. He gladly took me in, saying that I would have been left in a minute more. This seemed a fortunate hap, but it did not then occur to me that the good hand of God was in it; for I long felt that He had abandoned me to my own way. On the other shore we shook hands, and I hurried on as best I could, on top of the breastworks thrown up across the island. The snowflakes fell thick and fast, adding to my burden, so that I would stop and shake it from my hat and overcoat, wishing that it did not snow so, because it hindered my speed, and I feared my failing strength would not hold out, or that I might be too late; yet but for the light of the snow I could scarcely have made my way for the darkness. Near the river was a narrow but deep bayou, and just as I reached it three or four noisy soldiers walked out of the lower deck of the guard-steamer to put out the lights for the night (about 10 o'clock), and I hailed them with all the voice I could command, but almost despaired of making them hear me--for they were all talking and laughing loudly, and my voice was weak. At last one said, "Hush, boys, isn't some one calling?" Another said, "No, I guess it is the noise of the wind". Then I made a

desperate effort and succeeded, to my great relief, for I was in great fear. They crossed the narrow strip of land and came over to me in a flatboat, into which I climbed, and as I did so one said, "Well, comrade, if you had been a minute later you would have been left, for we had come out to put out the lights". They directed me along a line of gangways from one steamer to another (for the river was full of them to carry the entire army up it that night), until I reached the longed-for Tigris, far out and down. At last that most trying march of my life--and for my life--was ended, the goal was reached and I was rescued--mercifully delivered from that awful thralldom. Shaking off the wet snow and ascending to a commodious cabil, I laid down valise and bundle, overcoat and hat, and sank in an arm chair before a red-hot stove, almost completely exhausted, feeling that I could not have held out but little longer.

In a few minutes two well-dressed men came in and sat down on the other side of the large stove, not seeming to notice me, and one said to the other: "Captain, how soon will you pull out of here?" "Just as soon as this snow storm blows over a little, so we can see to pilot the boat. If it had not been for the snow storm we should have been gone two hours ago". Never were words spoken more wonderful to me; for they told me that the merciful God, who rules the storm, had sent down that snow and held the boat, and that He had not forsaken me, as I supposed, but was yet with me and had thus delivered me from so great a peril and death. O how precious the assurance that the Lord cared for me still, and that my life and well-being were precious in His sight! My sweet emotions of love and gratitude to Him who had thus marvelously saved me were too full for utterance in words, and the place seemed a very heaven to me; for I comfortably felt the presence of the Lord, and my meditations of Him

were sweet all that night--for I did not lie down to sleep, being on duty as nurse, but rested in that chair. I soon found my three patients and told them I was there to wait on them until we reached a hospital in Paducah--but they needed very little attention.

About sunrise we landed at this city, and as ambulance carried us to a comfortable hospital, where each of us were taken to neat beds, and I saw the three no more. A kind citizen physician soon came to me, examined me and said, "My friend, I would advise you to go home; for you can't get well here, but with good water and kind attention at home, you might recover. I will give you a sixty days' furlough if you will go home." As I did not like to seem too anxious, I said that I had no money to pay my way home. But he kindly assured me that there would be some way for me to get there; so it was soon settled that I should go, greatly to my joy. That afternoon I was able to walk down to a near store, where I offered a revolver for sale--which a prisoner after the surrender at Ft. Donaldson had begged me to give him a dollar for, and I did so to favor him, having no use for it myself--the only firearm I ever owned. To my glad surprise, a clerk in the store kindly gave me \$10 for it, and I heartily thanked him; for this would pay my way home, and I felt wonderfully helped.

The next morning I set out, homewardbound; but as it was Saturday, and the trains did not run on Sunday, I stopped at Jonesboro, Ill., having learned that my friend and brother, Col. True, was there with a new regiment. He very generously lodged me at his headquarters until Monday, and then gave me a free pass on the cars as far as I could go toward home--to Effingham, Ill. He did more; he transferred me to his regiment, and appointed me on his regimental staff as hospital steward, thus rescuing me from the cruel power of Dr. Edgar, who had been bent on sacrificing me--only

because he once overheard me condemn the cruelties which some of our marauding soldiers inflicted upon peaceable old men, women and children in the South. Through the merciful hand of God, I was now free from him, and saw him no more. Whether he learned that our humane Col. Ross sent me away from his merciless tyranny, I know not; but I hope that God had mercy upon him, as He was merciful to me.

After my return home I seemed to improve a little at first; so that I made a business trip to central Indiana, near our old home, in the settlement of an estate as administrator--alluded to before. But my diseases again grew worse and brought me very low, insomuch that my recovery was almost despaired of by my friends; and at the end of the sixty days I was barely able to be propped up in bed while I wrote a few lines to Col. True, telling him that I would report in person as soon as able; for I believed the Lord would raise me up again to "preach the preaching that He had bidden me", which I was then willing to cheerfully do.

In the time of this long sickness at home, when the kind neighbors and brethren would come in to visit and sit up with me, they often grieved my spirit by their complaints at the weather and backward spring, expressing fears about raising a crop; for this sounded to me like murmuring against the Lord, who was so merciful, kind and good. And for this I would kindly chide them, and remind them how good He was to us all for which we should thankfully trust in Him, knowing that He would provide and care for us.

As soon as able to ride on a bed in a wagon to Olney, twenty-five miles, where I took a train, I reported to Col. True, then encamped at Paducah, who was gladly surprised on seeing me; for he told me that, after getting my letter, he had expected to hear of my death. I at once made application for a discharge from the army, which he kindly assisted

me in obtaining. At the same time he generously offered me the position of second surgeon if I would stay; but I declined it, fearing to go into disobedience again, "lest a worse thing come unto me". I did not tell him this, however, not knowing that he could sympathize with me. But after many years, when he had grown gray, it was my privilege to meet with him as a fellow-preacher, when he told me that he not only understood my troubles in the army and felt a sympathy for me, but that he himself was also troubled then about preaching the gospel, and had been before entering the army, and that he had resisted it for twenty years before yielding. His great kindness and brotherly interest while in the army endeared him to me for life, and I rejoice that the Captain of Salvation and Prince of Peace has made him a true soldier of the cross, to proclaim "on earth peace".

In seeking for a discharge from the war, it was necessary that I should hunt up my former regiment and obtain an official paper from my captain; therefore, I boarded a steamer for Pittsburg Landing, and from there rode on horseback over the fearful battleground on the way to Corinth, where Grant's mighty army was again ready for battle, and there, after a long search, I found the regiment and Capt. English, in whose company was my enrollment. It was Sunday afternoon when I found his division and quarters, and as I slowly walked down the long line of tents, fronting westward, they were opened out to the warm sunshine, and it was a sad sight to see the small remnant of soldiers, looking so dejected, as they reclined in their tents, their ranks terribly thinned by the ravages of war and pestilence. The companies were sorrowfully cut down, one having only about thirty left. At the head of the row was the tent of Capt. English, who kindly received me, and as we talked my eyes fell on the noble saddle horse of Col.

Ross among others in a grove a little way from us, and I said, "Captain, where is Col. Ross?" With emotion he told me that he was mortally wounded in the recent battle at Pittsburg Landing, and died three days after. O, how sad! Humane, generous, noble Ross! Me he saved from such a fearful peril and death, but himself he could not save. I believe he was a Christian (He was a Methodist), and that the Lord took him to Himself, where the inhabitants shall no more say, "I am sick", "neither shall they learn war any more".

At last the time came when, with many tender regrets, I took a final leave of the army, at Kenton Station, Tenn., in July, 1862, bade adieu to Brig. Gen. True and my old friends with him, and, with a full and honorable discharge from the army, set out once more for home, now the Lord's freeman, henceforth to serve as a willing soldier in the army of the Captain of Salvation, the all-conquering Prince Immanuel, the triumphant and most glorious King Jesus, until He shall bid me put off my armor, lay down the cross, give me a full and blessed discharge from the good fight of faith, and graciously bestow upon me the blissful and everlasting crown of immortality and eternal life.

(Conclusion)

ELDER BEEBE'S EDITORIALS

The response to our inquiry regarding the possibility of publishing the editorials of Elder Gilbert Beebe in book form was not nearly as good as we had hoped for, but much more than we really expected.

Accordingly, we hope, the Lord willing, to go ahead with Volume Three late this fall or about the time you read this issue. This volume will consist of editorials that for the most part have never been reprinted in the VOICES OF THE PAST and will cover a wide range of subjects. There will be approximately 500 pages of new type and we hope the book will be of the finest quality.

We hope to provide more information in the near future.

J.F.P.

My dear Brother Spangler:

I am enclosing a poem written by my elder brother while away at school in Basset. He was in his seventeenth year at this writing and only found by my mother after his passing in his early twenties. She found much comfort in this poem and it may help some troubled soul if you wish to publish it in the *Signs*.

We had a wonderful meeting at River View Communion yesterday with Elder Leonard Key as our visiting Minister.

I will not be able to be with you in your meeting in Floyd Co. July 4th as it will conflict with Town Creek meeting. Hope that you and the brethren have a good day.

Come to see us.

Yours in hope of eternal life,
Elder P.E. Ingram

LIFE

A wearisome struggle is life
When viewed from the dark side;
And our thoughts bitter with strife,
When we are rowing against the tide.

Sometimes storms visit life's ocean,
And the turbulent billows roll;
But God set the storm in motion,
As trials to the faithful soul.

For those whom he loveth he chasteneth,
And troubles will come without fail'
But whose trust on Jesus fasteneth,
Shall have peace at last in the vale.

Then why complain of your sorrows?
But rather look up with a song,
For joy may come on the morrow,
And the longest life is not long.

We tarry a moment only,
Here on this wild rocky shore;
And people will not be lonely,
When they know us again no more.

But then, if we run the christian races,
And look to the helpless one's needs;

The world may forget our faces,
But it will not forget our deeds.

And while we are marching onward,
To that beautiful city of gold,
There's a brother walking downward,
We may bid him back to the fold.

And though our troubles may not cease,
Not while we here may live;
We often find the sacred peace,
That faith alone can give.

We are walking in the steps of Jesus,
As thousands have done before,
Soon times and places that have known us,
Shall know us again no more.

We soon shall cross to the other shore,
That rises just over beyond life's sea,
There we shall rest forever more,
From our troubles and trials free.

Thomas G. Ingram

Basset, Virginia

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PLEASE NOTE

The readers of the *Signs of the Times* will notice the address labels on their magazine each month as something new. We hope it will help each of you in renewing your *Signs* each year. Not only is your address much clearer, but your expiration date is much plainer, also.

With the cost of a First Class stamp now at 20¢ we can no longer afford to send out past due notices to those who are delinquent. If each of you will simply look from time to time at the label and mail in your renewal on time it will greatly help us to keep down the costs and avoid a price increase.

Beginning with this issue we will have to stop mailing the *Signs* to anyone over three months past due. Please note, however, that we will be glad to continue sending out the *Signs* to any who cannot afford to pay, either on a permanent or temporary bases.

Please direct any questions on this matter to our Circulation Office in Keeling, Virginia.

Editors

FROM OHIO

Randolph, Ohio

Elder D.V. Spangler,
Dear Brother,

Just a few lines this Sunday morning to say hello to you. We have never met each other, but still it seems like I have known you. I hear your name pop up once in a while so I am looking forward to seeing you sometime.

Dear Brother, I have here a letter from a dear friend that visits the Hopewell Church all the time, and has for years, but just won't join. Well, here is his letter. Would you look it over and see if it might be of any interest to the readers and shut-in people who take the dear old *Signs of the Times*. Dear Brother, if you ever have a mind to write me, please do so, and if you ever travel through this part of the country, please stop in to see this unworthy one. I have a little church house here on my place. We could stay out there and sing all night. I am writing

this at the breakfast table right now, trying to say a few things that are on my heart. Please forgive my weakness.

We feel to be a poor and needy people here. There are just the wife and I in this part of the country that believe the Primitive or Old Baptist way. The closest church is about 220 miles from here. We have church here at Grace Hill Church once a year and would like to invite everyone that believes the truth to come and visit with us. This year it will be, if the Lord wills, September 12 and 13th.

Will close for this time. May God continue to bless you in the stand and in your affairs.

Alpha and Mary Sears

Chestertown, Maryland

Dear Elder Williams,

I seldom ever write you a direct letter, but in my heart I have thought of it many times.

The *Signs* is a real mainstream of life for me, alongside of my Bible. I am situated in an area where there are no Old Baptists and my Church, Welsh Tract, is 45 miles away. I have lovely, caring neighbors and a large family of married children and grandchildren who love the Lord and love me. I am not starving for love, by any means, but I am missing the special love and fellowship that comes from associating with my brethren. Their songs are sweet, their love is precious, but it seems the special love I feel for and with our people is different and more satisfying to the soul. I've always been blessed to attend our second Sunday meetings, with no effort. My family enjoys taking me and being there, too. The past couple of years things have changed in my life, healthwise, and travel has become very painful. I've had to forego being at baptisms I longed to attend and share the fellowship with. I've had to miss the Delaware Association held with the Rock Springs Church in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. I missed the

beautiful services at the Southampton Church on the third Sunday in August. This was the first service there in many years, and Brother Jimmy Hamrick of Texas was the preacher there. All these were lovely occasions to praise God for The Lord has certainly been bringing new life into these churches that have been quietly awaiting his touch, to awaken to Spirit that sleeps there. "He speaks, and none can stay his hand".

Brother Williams, the purpose of my letter is to tell you, due to my failing health and the inability to take care of my home as formerly, I've had to leave it and move in with a daughter. Many heart breaking tears were shed in the late hours, but my God knew all about it and after a week of weeping and prayer for guidance, He gave me sweet peace Praise His Name. A grandson and his bride now live in my home. I've put that behind me, with God's help.

I am sending the address for my *Signs* to be sent to, and I hope it will continue to come to me. God bless you all. I love you for the truth's sake.

If it would be possible, please print my new address, as I have many dear ones in the South and West who write to me. Thanks so much. My new address is:

Ruth Lucht
c/o Mervin Cohey
R. 1, Box 512
Chestertown, Md. 21620

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER

April 24, 1981

Dear Pa and Ma Parks, (O.W. Parks of Sinton, Texas)

I wanted to write to you and let you know how much we all enjoyed having you up for our fifth Sunday meeting at Shepherd Fold Church. Aunt Mary Barron said she really enjoyed it more than she had for a while. I hope the good Lord blessed it to your hearts, also.

I went to Winnsboro the Second weekend and stayed with the Hamricks. I guess Jimmy (Hamrick) and I stayed

up late walking and talking every night. Baptism and uniting with the church had been heavy on my mind ever since the fifth Sunday. The Lord has blessed me to have him as a comforter presently. Jimmy offered me encouragement to join and he had answers to many questions that plagued me. I wanted to join so badly Saturday but I felt so dead, dry, and cold. I knew it would have to be an unction from above for me to go forward and it just wasn't present within me.

I felt Saturday night that after talking some more to Jimmy about my unworthiness to join and feeling so lifeless and how Saturday I kept saying to myself, "You! join the church; after all you've done? Forget it! Just stay in your seat!" But by then I felt tormented by that desire for a home and knew if I felt Sunday like I did then I just couldn't join. I didn't know if I could stand another one or two or three weeks like the previous two. Then Jimmy was talking to me Saturday night and the whole picture seemed to change. I had a new tune to sing, "Oh Lord, please give me the strength to go forward to the honor and glory of Your Name, if it be Thy will!"

Sunday Brother Joe (Elder Hamrick) preached from Matthew 3:1-12. I've never felt a sermon prick my heart as that one did. Brother Joe preached the "whole" doctrine, too. I wish I had taped it so you could have heard it. Before he finished, my heart was just begging him to stop preaching. He had opened with "Amazing Grace" and when Brother Joe closed he asked that we sing it again. That was more than my poor heart could take. I trust and pray it was our Lord that gave me the strength to go forward. I had to go, I had absolutely nowhere else to turn. Those little children of His at Hopewell voted to take me in which upon reflection, was a total miracle. It had to be His love that was present because I can't believe that His children could love plain old Trudy

Pullig.

I hope you can come this first weekend to Shepherd Fold. The baptism is Saturday at 6 P.M. If I say "my baptism" I feel scared to death. If I say "the baptism", well, maybe it won't be just mine but also some of His loveliest children from Sinton. This is in no way meant as pressure, just as encouragement from one who loves you dearly.

I don't guess I should have been the one to write to tell you of this, but you are so dear to me. I hope I didn't write to my honor and glory but only to His. Our Lord is indeed all merciful to have saved the lowest, most sinful wretch like me.

With much love,
Trudy (Pullig)

FROM MISSISSIPPI

Carthage, Mississippi

Dear Editors:

As you can see, I'm late with my renewal and I appreciate you not letting me miss a copy.

I will be 95 years old this November 16, and feel blessed to be able to see well enough to read the *Signs*, but most of all I feel blessed to be able to feast on the writings. This is a blessing that lots of people don't have at my age and I thank my Master for it.

Yours in hope of a better world,
H.S. Richardson

Dear Brother Spangler:

I'll try in my feeble way to write my reason of hope. I feel the Lord has blessed my husband and me all the days of my life and I hope He has given me a sweet hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, althought I have not lived on flowery beds of ease. I have always feared God because I know He has all power and everything is going according to His will. When I was a small girl I'd dream of the end of time coming and I was so afraid, but the fire would burn right over me and not hurt me.

We married in the year 1931. I thought after my second little girl was born that there was more thunder storms that spring than I had ever known. I thought every night when I went to bed I'd never see my husband and children again and I'd die and torment would be my home. One night I dreamed that there was a deep pit in our front yard and I went down to the bottom of it and thought it was torment and I smelled my flesh burn. I couldn't sleep and I couldn't pray. Oh, I was in so much trouble. One night I dreamed that I went to the tobacco barn right close to my house. We had a pig lot there and when I walked up this pretty woman, who looked like an angel, had a huge book in her lap and little children all around her feet. When I walked up she had already written my dear husband's name in that book and was about to write mine. I thought they were written in gold letters. For a long time and up until now even, I don't dread death.

That same year my oldest boy was born. He was very sick and was in the hospital five weeks and three days when he was just two months old. During this time I went to Pleasant Grove Church on the third Saturday in May and Brother Standfield preached from Isaiah, and that was the first sermon I really had ever heard.

I had to go to Reidsville Hospital when this same little boy was about five years old and I was prepared for surgery. I was in a private room all alone and I thought about slipping out and going home to my husband and children because I was so afraid to have the operation. The Lord spoke to me in a loud clear voice that rang from one end of the building to the other, and He said, "Fear not, I am with you always, even unto the end of the earth". I didn't fear anything after that. Oh, how I long to hear His voice again.

Sometimes I go to church and come back so blue. If only my companion

could see fit to join, but we have to wait upon the Lord's time. I wanted to join for 32 years before I went, and what a happy day when I was finally given the strength. I hope I am one of His, but feel to be a very poor church member, no good to anyone. I have never felt like I had a home here on earth, and wonder if I have one in heaven. I sure hope and pray that I do.

I hope it is all of your desire to pray for me and mine. Come to see us.

Love,
Sister Rena C. Smith

Dear Brother Poole,

The Lord put some sweet thoughts in my mind at an Association in southern Alabama about three years ago, and I have never forgotten their basic premises. They concern the description given in the Bible of the Lord in two of His many roles as the Son of God. He is referred to in several places as both a "lion" and a "lamb" and it was shown to me by revelation (I trust) on the occasion mentioned that the two roles go hand in hand.

You will recall that when Jacob was dying he called all his sons unto him and prophesied concerning them. When he came to Judah he saw something far in the future concerning the advent of Christ. "Judah, thou art a lion's whelp," etc. Have you ever wondered where we got the idea that the lion is the king of beasts? I may be wrong but I believe that it came from the Bible.

Go to the book of Revelation and read about the occasion when John wept much because no one could unloose the seals on the book in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, and notice what happened!

Revelation 5:5-7 "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the

midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. and he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."

The Lion of the tribe of Judah (the King) was also the Lamb of God (the Priest), who prevailed to open the Book of Life by suffering and death. In Jesus, the Lion and the Lamb laid down together in death. At that hour the work of the Lamb was completed, witnessed by the fact that when the soldier pierced His side blood and water flowed out; and from that moment the sins of God's people were put away forever!

What about the Lion, however? As the King, Jesus arose triumphant, conquered all His foes, sat up His spiritual kingdom in the hearts of His people, and began His gospel reign in them. Since that time His people have worshipped Him as both the Lamb who took away their sins and the Lion who rules in them for their eternal good and God's great glory.

Add your own thoughts, dear Brother. This is precious food to the soul.

Humbly in hope,
John Wingfield

THUS SAYS A WRITER CONCERNING MR. BROOK

This faithful servant of Christ, of whom a judicious friend of his remarks, "If ever the Lord made one man more honest than another, it was Mr. Brook", left the Establishment, sacrificing about six hundred pounds a year. Whilst contemplating this step, a singular providence occurred. A person who was returning from India, laden with wealth, plunder, and crimes, had suffered great horrors of mind on his passage. When lying off Brighton, they become so insupportable that he cut his throat. It was discovered before life was extinct, and the wound was sewed up.

Mr. Brook, being the parish clergyman, was sent for to administer the sacrament to him. When he saw this poor wretched being, he told him of his dreadful enormities and iniquities; but in the midst of this horrid detail, the wound broke open, and he instantly died. The corpse was put on shore at Brighton, and Mr. Brook had to read the funeral service over it. When he came to those parts which speak of the certain bliss of the deceased, and give thanks unto God for taking the soul of his brother to himself, such emotions filled his mind, such agitation and trembling came upon him that he thought he should have sunk into the grave. "What", said he, "could I think, but that if I insulted the Almighty, and told lies at this rate, he would cut me down, and send me to hell, as I was fully convinced he had done this miserable man, as surely as ever a soul was sent to perdition". This decided the point. He directly quitted the church, though this blasted all his earthly prospects, left him without any income or earthly prospect of support; and though he endured the greatest trials from his friends, and suffered manifold and grievous afflictions, he never regretted this act. When in church, he had for his hearers his present Majesty (George IV), princes, peers, judges, bishops, deans; soon after he left it, but few constant hearers beyond the rank of day laborers. In the short space of a few weeks he was surrounded with gorgeous array, the pride, pomps, and fashion of the world; then nothing before him but smock-flocks, plain countrymen, many of whom came five or ten miles to hear him preach. But this did not last long; his hearers increased, and many in the middle walks of life attended his ministry. When he came to London, which he often did, he had at least 1,500 attentive and admiring hearers. In a few years another change awaited him. The pulpit in which he preached in London became closed against him. Many

friends in the country forsook him also. These things came upon him for no fault of him. A few faithful were found amongst the faithless, who claved to him to the last. He was indeed a tree of righteousness of God's own planting, and laden with fruit—a flower of great beauty, and full of fragrance, promising extensive usefulness for many years. But the tree was soon cut down, the flower withered and died, or rather was transplanted into its native region. He died the 23rd of September 1811, in the thirty-seventh year of his age.

The Gospel Standard
January 1, 1856

EDITORIAL

And I, brethren, when I came to you came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power. (1 Cor. 2:1-4)

As the Saviour came under the law and dwelt among and lived among those under the law, even so, He taught them to pray and His manner of praying while under it. Equally so, when He had finished the day's work (John 9:4) He then taught them His prayer (John 17). Thus we find full instruction for every precept and example given in the Bible. This is true in this day of preaching to the Gentiles. The Holy Spirit is our Guide into all truth (John 16:13), and Jesus made the day's journey into this low ground, and then performed the day's work to a jot and a tittle. There is a "thus saith the Lord" for every step of the way, and He hath not left us comfortless.

The manner in which Paul came to Corinth is the only way to be found in the written testimony of Jesus Christ,

and there is no need to seek any other way among the works of men. Dear yoke-fellow in the ministry of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, will you examine with me the manner in which Paul appeared before these brethren? And will you beg the Lord to verify the truth as He leads us into it by leading us to examine ourselves as to whether we have a "thus saith the Lord" for our manner of appearing before the saints of God? There is an injunction to the man of faith for self examination. (1 Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:9) Who is going to rule out that examination? We must remember that whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Faith causes the children of God to examine themselves to see if they are walking in truth. When not walking by faith, but some other way, (however cleverly or elaborately, or, for that matter, however humbly) it is wrong. It must meet the discerning eye of the Spirit to be right.

Many false doctrines have been spoken and published about Paul's preaching, as well as what he preached. There is not any doubt at all in my mind about what he preached. It was grace every step of the way. He attributed his being born from his mother's womb to the Lord; likewise he attributed his being called to minister to the grace of God. (Gal. 1:15,16) Now I do not know a member of a single faction of our people that claims a call to preach that does not attribute that call to the grace of God. However, I know many excellent men that do not have the same experience as regards his life after the initial call, to the same thing that Paul does. He tells us that what he was, was by the grace of God. However, they utilize the grace, but if business or family or other things come along and get in their way, then the grace is a failure. I have searched as diligently as I know how to ascertain the difference in graces, that is, which and how much is it of effectual grace that saves a man the first time and the grace that he wastes and neglects and

because of this, that, and the other, he still doesn't get saved. I have found but one grace that saves sinners, and it is the same kind of grace that saved and called him the first time. It's the same grace from that time to the end of his life.

Paul did not preach one doctrine for time and something else for eternal salvation. It is a good work to be called to preach the gospel (1 Tim. 3:1), and since Paul declared that truth to us, I desire to preach the same doctrine that he did, to wit, not to know anything among my people except Christ and Him crucified! If language means anything, that was all that could be preached o the comfort and edification of the Corinthians.

The prophet declared that a virgin would conceive and bear a Son; that His name would be called Immanuel, which being interpreted, is God with us. (Isa. 7:14) Hundreds of years later an angel announced the same good news. That announcement carried with it the message that Israel had been waiting for, to wit, "He shall save His people from their sins". (Matt. 1:21)

As I look back at the long solitary watches of the shepherds as they tended their flocks, and as I look back and hear the groans of Israel as they sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, waiting and watching for the rays of the Sun of righteousness, I think I feel for them. What a tender fellowship springs up in my trembling bosom for that humble servant of God that had persecuted unto death those that called upon the name of Jesus. He was arrested by that same Jesus and sent to that church with his memory blotted out about that he should have done in the name of Jesus. But now he is determined not to know anything save that same Jesus and Him crucified.

His faith enabled him to overcome the world (1 John 5:4), for there has been no greater faith than the kind with which Paul was possessed. It armed him for

the great conflict before him of going out to face his former associates and preaching so boldly to them the opposite of what he formerly preached. I have not time to, and it is vain and useless to talk about a man-made faith. Faith is a gift of God, and it not only overcomes all fears of the world, but it enables us to overcome ourselves, so that we are made willing to go into the very jaws of death with the determination to follow on through thick and thin, through good report and evil, our blessed Lord and to preach Him as an all sufficient Saviour.

Come poor sin-burdened reader and behold the theme of Paul; Jesus Christ and Him crucified, the Way, the Truth, the Life, yea, the only Name under heaven given among men whereby poor sinners must be saved. At the mention of such a theme my mind is carried to the search that God made for one worthy to bring salvation unto Him. None was found. Ah, dear reader, the world says that we are behind the times, that we are in a worn out rut, because we have depended only on grace, and that we need a modern outlook. Do we? Had an Old Baptist been standing near at hand when the Lord looked and found none to help, we, of all people, would have understood, and would have agreed that there was none able to take the Book and loose the seals thereof (Rev. 5:4), but the world at large (the unborn world) would have persecuted him there as they later did persecute Him on earth, and had the people of God been there in the annals of eternity and have heard the Lord say, "Since among men I find none to help, therefore mine own arm hath brought salvation unto me", we would have heard the same good news that the church has ever heard, to wit, "The strong arm of God has brought salvation unto Him".

My friends sometime say to me, "You have an open mind, so don't you think you might be wrong about salvation being solely and wholly of the Lord?" My reply is always the same; "No sir, I

do not. My mind is closed about the way sinners are saved. It is by grace! If it is not by grace, then it is by works, for it cannot be this way or that. It is by grace. Paul was separated from his former way of thinking in regard to salvation. When God called him by His grace, He called him all of the way from works, his own testimony and experience bearing him witness in the Holy Ghost (Rom, 9:1). His mind was closed, and my mind is likewise closed to any conditions and works that I must do in order for me to come before God's people.

For Paul to do that, for me to do that, or for any of the people of the Gentile race to do so is to cast aspersion and reflection on the crucifixion of our Lord, for who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Christ has been crucified—is that not sufficient cause for rejoicing in the kingdom of heaven? Was that not sufficient for Abraham to be glad when he, by faith, saw His day? Was that not sufficient for the angel to say unto the people of God, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord". (Luke 2:10-11)? Was this not reason enough, after Paul had experienced the saving grace of this Saviour applied to him as he journeyed towards Damascus to persecute the saints, for him to have this divine determination not to know anything among the Corinthians save Jesus Christ and Him crucified?

Now let us notice the manner of his coming to them. As we leave the purpose of his coming, let us remember that none of the "lo here and lo there" are to be believed. In fact I have no hesitancy in saying to you that if you have discovered the falsity of Babylon that you come out of her that you be not partakers of her falsehoods and other evil, and that you be partakers with the heirs of the kingdom, Jesus Christ having been crucified for you. That is one of the ways that Paul came to the

brethren. He did not tell them that it did not make any difference if you belong to the church or not; he did not come before them telling them fabulous doctrines such as that God is as well pleased with you staying in a false way as He is when you obey His commandments. Paul did not write nor preach that way. This worm of the dust would beseech Him that wisdom be imparted to come among the churches expounding the full doctrine of God, the whole counsel of God, graced by the Holy Spirit to be able to follow the instructions of this servant. Paul, to his own son in the ministry; not to be afraid, not to please men, not to know any man after the flesh, but to preach the word, to be instant in season, out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For (verily, therefore) the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, etc.

"And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling". No man has the authority (nor the ability for long) to be all things to all men. Yet, to be truly and wholly the servant of the Lord, there are times when the servant must be in weakness and in fear, and in much weakness. For a man of Paul's background, the overthrow of his legalistic training and the instilling in him the grace of God was such an experience that he never forgot it. In fact, when a man is spoken to by the power of the Holy Spirit, whatever he does and says in serving God will be in fear and in trembling. The cruelty and audacity of Saul of Tarsus before the Damascus road experience, was such as to make the saints tremble at the mention of his name, but after that experience he, and his former associates, trembled and feared and were abashed in his presence. However, their trembling was not because of the work of God's grace but because of their fear of man.

The demonstration of power of God was such that Paul never did forget it. He

worked with the Pharisees before this demonstration of power; even after he openly rebuked them, and the same spirit in one and all that he met afterwards, but also, even after that demonstration, he was filled with a reverential fear of Jesus who demonstrated to him that He was Saviour, and his salutation to all those calling on the name of the Lord was as his brethren in Christ, and when writing or visiting among them, it was in weakness, and in fear and in trembling, and this spirit was accompanied by much humility and self abasement.

"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power". He separates his speech and his preaching. Putting on in speech is forbidden, and let it be known once and forever that using incorrect language to make it appear that you belong to an ignorant, backwoods kind of people is as far from preaching the gospel as it is to make use of a superfluity of words (2 Cor. 9:1) to make people think that you are a learned man. Hypocrisy for either cause is strictly forbidden by common decency (I Cor. 14:40), by the general tenor of the scriptures, but more especially by Paul's appearing before and with the brethren at Corinth. It certainly would take as much forethought and practice to use corny language to create an impression of ignorance, as it would to use too many words to create an impression of learnedness. The instruction of Paul by telling about his appearing among the brethren at Corinth is as much towards too much of a thing as well as to little of it.

He is saying, so it seems to me, that any attempt to be other than what I am, a poor sinner saved by the grace of God, is not according to what was taught me on the Damascus road, and what I learned in solitude in Arabia. It is not too much to say that in this solitude,

being in seclusion with only the Holy Ghost to teach and direct and to bring again to Jerusalem, he was taught what and how to preach, and what his manner before the saints should be. And it is exactly right; not too much, and not too little, of the demeanor, both in what is preached and in how it is preached then, now, and forevermore by everyone that is called of God's grace to minister to the churches.

(Elder) W.D. Griffin

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

NOTES OF A SERMON BY ELDER LEFFERTS AT THE BROAD RUN MEETINGHOUSE, JULY 2, 1933

(Taken by Sister Grace Aston)

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Romans (5:20)

Grace abounded! Where? Just in the same place that sin abounded, not somewhere else. Verse 19 tells us, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Why did Paul say many were made sinners, instead of all? Because it is the same many that shall be made righteous which were under consideration. The one man who was disobedient was Adam, the one who was obedient, the Lord Jesus Christ. Adam was created sinless, and lived in a beautiful paradise. God gave him a law, but Adam broke it, and so lost his paradise. This was no surprise to Adam's Maker. God did not have to change his plan because Adam transgressed, for he knew Adam would do so, and had provided for the salvation of the elect of Adam's posterity. Jesus stood as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, which was before Adam was created. Although the fall of man was in God's purpose, man is the sinner, and the child of God

cannot hide behind predestination as the cause of his sin. Some have sought to prove Cain a child of God, but Cain said after he had killed his brother, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." He thought he was getting more than he deserved, but God's children know that they deserve the pains of hell. When David's sin was discovered to him, he said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

There is such a thing as embracing predestination with the natural understanding without being a partaker of God's grace; but such an understanding is but to allow one to live as one lists. The believer is dead to sin by the dead body of Christ, so how can he live any longer therein? It is true that we do sin, our nature is not changed, but another mind is given us, warring against the old man of sin. The Scripture says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." But living in sin is very different from being plagued with it. When God spoke to Adam of his transgression, he said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat." Eve said, "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat." Not much repentance there! They had made themselves aprons of fig leaves sewn together to hide their nakedness, but before they transgressed they knew nothing about nakedness. How foolish to think such a garment could hide them: but see the goodness of God: he made coats of skins and clothed them. This meant the shedding of blood, life to be laid down; for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission."

What is grace? We have often heard it said that it is the free unmerited favour of God: but it is much more than that. If a tramp should come to our door, asking for something to eat, there would be no reason why we should give to him. We might give to him, but that would not be grace, but kindness: but should the

tramp beat us and illtreat us, and then we rise up and set a meal before him, that would be gracious, so it is with God's favour. Not only is there no reason, no merit in us, why God should be gracious unto us, but there is every reason why he should not. Not only is there no merit, but positive demerit. Grace did not merely abound where sin abounded. Man lost his earthly paradise through transgression, and had grace only abounded where sin abounded, man would have only been placed from whence he fell, so would still be where he could fall again, but grace much more abounds and places the elect of God beyond the reach of sin, and into the presence of God, to go no more out. This grace abounds unto us through the suffering life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Going back to Adam, we find that God told him that because of his transgression, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." When we view the sufferings of the Son of God, how much more did grace abound than the guilt and consequence of man's sin! Jesus was made a curse for us, for "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Galatians 3:13. Though he knew no sin, yet our sins were imputed unto him, and as such (with all reverence we say it) in the sight of God, Jesus became an "accursed thing." In an agony Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Some say that God did not really forsake him, that Jesus only felt forsaken; but, for one awful moment, God really did turn his face from him, for Jesus had to endure the hell due to his people, banishment from God, the just desert of their sins. God told Adam, "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." Jesus was a "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

The Scriptures tell us "His visage was so marred more than any man," and that "When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." We esteemed him stricken, smitten of God,

when all the while he was smitten for us. "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." When Jesus was delivered to be crucified, they platted a crown of thorns and put it upon his head: oh, what thorns! They also smote him on the head. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground," and Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, was in such agony for sinners that his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling on the ground. "For dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

You may say, but Jesus' body did not turn to dust. Let us turn to Psalm 22. This Psalm is testifying to the sufferings of Jesus, and verse 15 says, "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." Those of us who in days gone by went a long way at a funeral with horses in hot dry weather, will remember how we would be covered with dust. It was in our eyes, in our nostrils, in our mouths, and we were covered in it from head to foot. This is nothing compared to the dust of death into which Jesus was brought. Wretches who, but for the suffering and death of Jesus, would have been doomed to eternal torment, were the cause of his suffering, dead in sin, and Jesus was brought into this very dust of death. While the book of Genesis records the beginning of things, Revelation closes the sacred canon with the final consummation of things. Many things in Genesis, the first book, are verified and rounded out in Revelation, the last book; and Revelation closes with this awful warning, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life." God verily told Adam that in the day that he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he should surely die. Salvation, or our having a part in writing our name in the

book of life, is not a co-partnership work between the sinner and God. The sinner has no part in it. He is the blessed recipient of it, but has no part at all in its accomplishment. Had Adam and Eve held to the command as God gave it, they might have saved paradise for themselves and so have avoided death, and so have had a part in the book of life, but they lost it, so that salvation is wholly of grace. Our federal head having anything to do with our salvation is blotted out. I would impress on your minds these two words, "much more." Man's sin brought the loss of an earthly paradise, but this grace "much more" abounds, in that God will bring us into his presence with joy, placing us where we cannot lose it.

This sermon was followed by the observance of the Lord's Supper. How fitting! It was as the setting to a precious stone. As never before did one enter in to this ordinance, one's feelings being that of mingled shame, sacred sorrow, and a holy quiet joy.

Grace Aston

PREACHING

The most sacred and most noble profession is that of a gospel preacher, yet it is considered as the poorest trade. The preaching of the gospel is so sacred and great that I am continuously reminded of my weakness and unworthiness to fill such a sacred position. I take comfort in the thought that Paul felt the same: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should *preach* among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. 3:8) Paul considered preaching grace as a mighty and wonderful gift of God. I do not believe that a gospel minister can think too humbly of himself — nor can he think too highly of the Prince who called him into this noble profession. Our felt sense of unworthiness really graces us to bear great treasures to others. Many poor messengers have delivered great

treasures to others. I may be an evil messenger but I know that I am not bearing an evil message. I may be as one of Noah's carpenters who helped in building the ark but had no place in it when the floods came; yet, my comfort is that I have part in bearing the message of God's love and grace.

I may be a castaway but I feel that I will be compelled to thank God for having blessed me to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the afflicted and poor people. When you see the despondent ones raised up to the point of rejoicing, it gladdens your heart to see that the Lord has graced your preaching to their comfort. A gospel minister could not conscientiously require a congregation to pay him for his preaching, because, if he has been given preaching grace, he has already received more reward of the Lord than he could possibly receive from the congregation. No true minister will ever complain of the sacrifice he has made in order to pursue this noble ministration. Paul said in 2 Cor. 12:15: "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." What great love Paul had for the Lord's people!

Considering the sacredness and the success attached to gospel preaching, we are next inquiring as Paul did: "Who is sufficient for these things?" Read the last 6 verses of the 2nd chapter and the 3rd chapter of 2nd Corinthians and you will note the happy success which God gave to Paul's preaching; as well as this success being wholly accredited to God. Paul says, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." We are convinced that God's ministers are called, qualified, sent forth, and used of God for the good of His people, as well as to praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The outstanding evidence that God has called one to preach is that he

preaches the power of God, for a person will preach the power that sent him as the excellent power. Listen to one's preaching for he will unconsciously identify his caller; whether it be money, man, the devil, or God. God qualifies his ministers in the furnace of affliction, and they come through great tribulations which burn the dross of pride, selfishness, vain-glory, and any other vice; which makes them beggars at the footstool of God's throne.

God's ministers experience to a greater degree all of the phases of Christian experience, both pleasant and unpleasant, in order to orient them properly for the profession they must fill. God sometimes suffers his ministers to follow the bidding of designing men, and to experience the consequences, in order to make them more willing to heed His commands. The minister must be well taught to go wheresoever and whensoever the Lord sends him. God uses His ministers as message-bearers and they are ordained to go forth in the fear of God — not man; to please God, not as men pleasers.

His ministers must be of good report within as well as without. They may become victims of false brethren and outsiders who give bad report; yet, their lives and conduct should be so that the mouths of gain-sayers may be stopped without the minister having to come to his own rescue. True brethren are always ready to defend their elders from vile effects of erroneous and damaging reports. God blesses the ministers' gifts to find room in the hearts of true brethren sufficiently that it is needless for ministers to use valuable time in self-defense. Offenses must come but the woe is pronounced upon the offender, not the offended. *A minister must realize that his temptations are more varied, that he is more closely watched, and he is the target of more envy and jealousy than anyone in the church.* How careful we should be in our department.

A minister should be "Apt to teach." He should study to rightly divide the word of truth. He should be one who is given to use simple terms in explaining the scriptures and placing scriptural expressions in their proper settings. When one lifts a scriptural expression out of its context to such an extent that it has a very different meaning, he does violence to the right division. A minister should not take a few words and dwell upon them exclusively to get them all out of proportion, until they become vain imaginations which are foreign to their intended meaning. I have heard much of this, which results only in entertainment and arousing emotions, and the audience dismissed without being edified on the proper meaning of the expression. Sometimes we are tempted to use a few words to this extent in order that the hearers may talk about how wise we are, to get so much out of so little. Let us ask our hearers, who make such expressions, What did you get from it? *I am convinced that the fact is the congregation was more entertained than edified.*

Meandering preaching generally aims at nothing and hits nothing. I have heard people talk a long time, yet they never did tell me what they were talking about. I cannot tell what purpose they have in saying what they say. A true preacher preaches his convictions and attempts to support them with the scriptures. He does not emphasize his wisdom but his convictions. We read a scripture which says, "We also believe, and therefore speak." (Read 2 Cor. 4:13.) I am becoming very conscious of how precious the time is which is devoted to preaching. This time must not be wasted by idle talking and vain repetitions. Some must travel a long journey to hear preaching and are not privileged to sit more than an hour or two under the audible sound of preaching each month. May God forbid that this precious time be ill-used by a careless person who seeks not to edify his hearers. This time

should be used for the good of others and not for the speaker's own vain-glory. None but those who are as diligent to sow the wheat of good doctrine, as the devil is to sow tares, should occupy the time allotted for preaching. We should seek to use only enough simple words to clothe our thoughts, and only thoughts which tend to promote truth and virtue should be emphasized. Preaching time is too precious to be wasted by saying things without purpose for saying them. Time is too precious for long preliminaries or telling amusing stories. The profession is too sacred to treat lightly and to talk loosely and for any display of ignorance.

God's use for preaching is so important that we should use proper dignity in the pulpit so that what we say may be properly enunciated. Our true hearers are interested in understanding every word spoken, therefore they listen carefully and appreciate it when every word is distinctly spoken. They are not so much interested in *how* we say things as *what* we say. Sometimes peculiar mannerisms of the preacher so attracts the hearer that he loses the thoughts expressed. Sometimes we become so emotional while preaching that our speaking is marred with incoherent sounds and our hearers do not distinctly understand what we say. ***If the things we are speaking are worth the time used in speaking them, surely they are worth being understood by our hearers.***

Proper characteristics and suitable manners of God-called ministers are especially stressed in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus. These principles, tempers, and proper conduct are minutely named and specifically defined in these books of the New Testament. It would be well for ministers to read them carefully and often as letters of instructions addressed individually to each one of us. Each one of you have Bibles to read so it is not necessary for me to include them in this

treatise, but is necessary for me to request you to read both letters to Timothy and the one to Titus as a part of this article. Cataloging scriptures is not preaching. Hearers have Bibles to read, and the earnest hearer reads it often. They are more interested in hearing you expound the scriptures than your precise quotations of them. Interested hearers often check your scriptural references, and, when they get to themselves, read the scriptures which are before and after your quotations. Then, they compare your treatise on them with the context.

Some may ask, Why preach? I have heard it vehemently proclaimed that God saves His people wholly and completely in every sense without the necessity of preaching. I fear that some who fill the pulpit feel exactly that way about it, considering the carelessness manifested while attempting to preach. If our preaching be not necessary, Why preach? I am thoroughly convinced that Paul spoke rightly when he said, "...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to *save* them that believe." God has use for preaching in saving the believer. What is the central text of Gospel preaching? Paul says, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Why preach Christ to a believer? Christ said, "...Ye believe in God, believe also in me." The eunuch of Ethiopia as well as Cornelius believed in God before they believed in Jesus Christ. God was pleased to use a minister to effectually preach Jesus Christ to them. In each case God commanded the minister to go, and it pleased God that through these ministers' preaching that these should also believe in Jesus Christ. Let us quote Romans 10:13-14, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they

be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."

Our reasons for preaching from the pulpits, by medium of writing, and in private conversations should be for God's glory and for the benefit of hearers and readers. Sometimes it is to stir up pure minds by way of remembrance of the things they have heretofore been told and have experienced. Sometimes it is to inspire a desire for spiritual development that the auditors may pray the Lord to bless them. Sometimes it is to admonish one who has strayed from the becoming walk of the Lord's people. Sometimes it is to unconfuse the confused so that the little bits of beliefs may be unscrambled and placed in an orderly manner to such extent that the hearer is more aware of what he believes. *Spiritual stimulation and nourishment should be the aim of every minister.*

Yes, preaching comforts the depressed ones, encourages the discouraged, and renews hope, as well as strengthens faith. No minister of God preaches for filthy lucre, nor to gain himself a reputation, nor to get a personal following. His purpose sometimes is to exhort his hearers to righteous and Godly walking; yet, while so doing he does not forget the sacred truths of sovereign grace. Should one treat upon vices and virtues only without the grand principles of grace and the mighty power of God, it would be like placing the wheels properly in a watch, setting the hands, and forgetting to put in the mainspring which makes the watch work. On the other hand, should you preach the sovereignty of God only, it would be as though you observed only the mainspring and paid no attention to the works in the watch, nor the position of the hands on the face of the watch. It is often a vital question to me, What should I preach in order to preach a complete gospel sermon? When

I first began to teach in the schools I was told to stress three "R's": 'Riting, Reading, & 'Rithmetic. I am convinced now that ministers should stress five "R's": Ruin, Redemption, Regeneration, Righteousness, and Resurrection. (Also Reconciliation. J.F.P.)

Ministers preach that all of Adam's posterity was *ruined* through the sins of Adam to such extent that man could not reform himself to the original condition of Adam. All who were in the loins of Adam could hope for nothing but eternal death. All who were chosen in Christ were *redeemed* through the righteousness of Jesus Christ to such an extent that God's chosen ones would be delivered from the clutches of eternal death. All who were in the loins of Christ could be assured of eternal life because of this redemption by His life and His death. All those who were redeemed by Jesus Christ are subjects of *regeneration* by mighty power of the Holy Spirit. All the redeemed are born again, being regenerated by eternal life. True ministers preach that *righteousness* being manifested in the walk and conversation of the regenerated ones is the evidence and effect of regeneration. All who are regenerated and have the gift of the living faith will be careful to maintain good works. All God-called ministers will point out to his hearers the goal of the high calling which is the *resurrection*. The crowning work of God's grace is the resurrection from the dead. We point forward to the change when this mortal shall put on immortality; when this natural body shall be raised a spiritual body. We point forward to the prize which will be the transition from time into eternity. When we are under the dew-drippings of God's sanctuary and while feasting upon the gospel of Jesus Christ, we taste a little of Heaven. This makes it easier to endure the tribulations for a season.

Ministers love Jesus Christ and his people better than anything else in the world. The other day I read the first ten

verses of 1st chapter of 1st Corinthians. I noticed that Paul mentioned Jesus Christ ten times in these ten verses. Even though I was alone I said aloud, "Oh! what love Paul had for Jesus Christ!" Dear Ministers, you are promised persecutions and you will go through great tribulations, but God has also promised to be with you unto the end. False brethren may turn their back upon you and attempt to do all the harm they can, but may God bless you to preach Jesus Christ as Lord of the salvation of His people. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 16:22, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." This means to let him be accursed, suspended, and not worthy of attention.

May our ministration be blessed in our conduct and preaching that we may truthfully say, "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly, and unblameably we behave ourselves among you that believe: and ye know how we exhorted, and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of

the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men." (1st Thess. 2:7-15) The afore-quoted is what Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus said to the church of the Thessalonians. Can we truthfully say the same things to the churches of our pastorate???

Our sincere prayer is that God will so grace us as ministers to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.

July 1964 (Elder) E. J. Lambert

OBITUARIES

CARL CLAYSON BISHER

Brother Carl Clayson Bisher was born October 19, 1914 and died December 24, 1979 in Moses Cone Hospital in Greensboro. He was 65 years old. He leaves behind to mourn his loss his wife, Mamie Lanier Bisher, two sons, Gary and Dwight, and five grandchildren. One granddaughter preceded him in his death.

He joined Greensboro Primitive Baptist Church in 1979, having had a desire for many years to join. He expressed his love for the people of the Church.

His funeral was preached by his Pastor, Elder Kenneth Key, and opening prayer by Elder Leonard Key. The prayer and many comforting words were said. His body was laid to rest in Lakeview Cemetery, with many beautiful flowers over his grave.

Written by Mamie Bisher

MARY TALBOT DAUGHTRIDGE

Sister Mary T. Daughtridge, 82 years of age, was blessed by our Heavenly Father to receive her call in her sleep on October 4, 1980. She was loved by all who knew her and her faith and belief in salvation by grace was shown in her walk here in this life. She united with the Falls of Tar River Primitive Baptist Church in July 1935, and she filled her seat at her home Church and went to other Churches whenever she had a way to go. There is an empty place in the meeting house and in our hearts. She loved to talk about her love for Jesus and the brethren. A wonderful mother, grand-mother and friend,

was she.

She is survived by two daughters; Mrs. Mary Alice Odom of the home; Mrs. Nona Anderson and three sons; W.G. Daughtridge; L.E. Daughtridge; and D.T. Daughtridge all of Rocky Mount; 29 grandchildren and 21 great-grand-children.

Her funeral was conducted from Johnsons Funeral Home Chapel by her Pastor Elder D.B. Stokes, and Elder W.L. Everett. Burial was in Pineview Cemetery, where we believe she is asleep in the arms of Jesus, waiting for the second coming of our Lord.

The many friends and flowers gave evidence of the love that they felt for her. Our sympathy goes out to her family who will miss her, and those of us who loved her in the Spirit.

Resolved: A copy of these resolutions be sent to the family, a copy to *The Signs of the Times*, and a copy for the Church records.

Conference January 10, 1981
Elder D. B. Stokes - Moderator
Nina Pearson - Clerk

BROTHER JOHN THOMAS "TOMMY" BLANDFORD

Brother Tommy Blandford was called home by our Heavenly Father on Jan. 17, 1981, after a stay on this earth of 74 years. He united with the Falls of Tar River Primitive Baptist Church in April 1971. He loved to attend the meetings, coming when his strength was low. He was not well and when sickness prevented him from attending the meetings he would ask about his friends and the message presented. He loved to talk of Salvation by God's mercy and kindness. He will be missed by all of us, but our loss is his eternal gain. We hope to meet him in that glorious city and with him sing praises to our merciful God.

He is survived by his wife, Sister Katie Blandford; one brother, Robert L. Blandford of Rocky Mount; one sister Mrs. Cora Parker of Rocky Mount.

His funeral was conducted from the chapel of Johnson Funeral Home by his Pastor, Elder D.B. Stokes. He was laid to rest in Pineview Cemetery, where he awaits the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Resolved: That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the *Signs of the Times*; one to the

family and one for the church as a permanent record.

Done by order of conference June 1981.
Elder D.B. Stokes: Moderator
Patricia Whitley: Asst. Clerk

SISTER MARY LEOTA BRANSCOME

It has pleased God to remove from our midst at Bell Spur another dear sister.

Sister Leota Branscome was born July 31, 1891, and passed from this life June 10, 1981 at age of 89 years. She loved her church and loved to meet among the brethren and sing songs of praise. She had a sweet voice. She attended her church as long as she was able. She had been in a nursing home for some time.

Surviving are one son, E.G. Branscome, Fancy Gap, Va.; one grandson, one sister, three brothers, four step sons, twenty one step grandchildren. It is not known how long Sister Branscome was a member of the church, but she came to Bell Spur Church August 17, 1968.

She had many trials and afflictions here, but I believe she was made submissive to God's will. When we visited her in the nursing home in April she said she was just waiting for God to call her home.

Her funeral was conducted at Sky View Baptist Church by her pastor, Elder Amos Hash and Elder Hale Terry, and she was laid to rest in the Webb Cemetery at Sky View beside her husband, Eli Branscome, who preceded her death, there to await the coming of our Lord and Saviour when He comes to call His children home.

The large floral arrangements and the many friends attending the funeral showed forth the esteem in which she was held.

Written at the request of Bell Spur Church while in conference June 20, 1981.

Ilene Clifton, Clerk

C.M. TOLER

It pleased our Heavenly Father to call from our midst our beloved Brother Cornelius M. Toler on March 15, 1981. He was born February 9, 1883, in Valley Mills, Texas. His sojourn here in this old world of sin and sorrow was little more than 98 years.

He was married to Minnie Lou Beauchamp on August 3, 1914 in Jones

County, Texas. To this union eleven children were born. His dear companion and two children preceded him in death.

Brother Toler joined Little Flock Church, Altus, Oklahoma on August 29, 1970, by relation, coming to us from Sardias Church, Amarillo, Texas where he had been a member for many years. The Sardias Church had dissolved prior to this.

He was strong in the faith of God our Saviour and a faithful member to attend church when health permitted.

He surely will be missed by his dear children and family. Also, the church has lost a good soldier, but we trust and surely believe our loss to be his eternal gain.

Our dear Brother and Father in Israel leaves to mourn his passing five daughters, four sons, 25 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren and a host of relatives and friends.

His funeral services were conducted by his Pastor, Elder C.M. Haygood and he was laid to rest by his precious wife in the Memorial Park Cemetery, Amarillo, Texas, to await the redemption of these bodies, when he will hear that blessed voice, "Come ye blest of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

By request of Little Flock Church and family,
Elder C.M. Haygood

SISTER FLOSSIE PROCTOR STONEMAN CLARK

Our Sister and friend, Flossie Robbins Proctor Stoneman Clark, has departed from this world and was laid to rest in the Nashville Cemetery on September 11, 1980. While we in a sense do regret her passing, we are happy in that we believe that she is now with the Lord: Miss Flossie, as we have always called her, was long a special friend of our family. She had endeared herself to us all by being present just when we needed her, and as she had cared for our needs, or was otherwise visiting with us, she and I had many conversations concerning our love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Miss Flossie was born in the Rocky Mount, North Carolina area back in 1892. She became a member of the Falls Primitive Baptist Church in July 1919, and remained a faithful and active member as long as she

could get around. In these last years, when she was no longer able to travel, she often wrote of her love for Falls Church, and of her desire to be with her brothers and sisters in Christ here. She died in Florida on September 6, 1980, and, as it was her wish, she was brought back to Rocky Mount for her burial services, which were held at Gay-Yost Funeral home, with Elder William L. Everett assisting. The funeral was conducted by her pastor and long time friend, Elder D.B. Stokes, who spoke many words of comfort and peace unto her son, Joe Proctor, and to the many friends and family members who were present. Miss Flossie was also survived by two sisters, Mrs. Katie Latta of Norfolk, Virginia, and Sister Mattie Abrams of Tampa, Florida, who is also a member of the Falls Church.

Written by a friend and sister in Christ
Emily Williford Elmore

These resolutions were received in conference of the Falls of Tar River Primitive Baptist Church January 1981.

Elder D.B. Stokes: Moderator

BROTHER LUTHER PASLEY

It is with sadness and a heavy heart that I prepare a brief memorial for our Brother Luther Pasley. Yet God, through His eternal grace makes His people reconciled to His sovereign will. Our Brother believed this statement of truth.

Brother Luther Pasley was born December 25, 1898, in Franklin County, Virginia, to the late William Harrison and Kate Pasley. He married the former Mary Watson and to this union were born two children, Mary Elizabeth and William Harrison. He is survived by his wife, children, and four grandchildren.

Though there are no degrees of stature, spiritually speaking, among brethren, there was a special place in my heart for Brother Pasley. He asked for a home in the church the second Sunday night in September, 1970, along with my wife and me. The three of us were made submissive to burial in the liquid grave the following fourth Sunday morning. There was never a meeting following baptism that our Brother, if favored to be in attendance, did not make a special effort to speak and inquire of our well being.

Brother Pasley was a retired railroad

engineer. Yet, strangely enough, he seldom initiated conversation which pertained to his years with the railroad. He preferred rather to speak of the time he felt he heard the truth preached for the first time and the years of association with his brethren following that occasion.

Brother Pasley has on more than one occasion shared with me an account of his experience of grace. When he first felt he had a desire to hear the truth preached, he traveled extensively visiting churches of various denominations. He could not readily explain what his heart felt or desired, but somehow he knew he had not heard what his heart craved. Then, it was the purpose of God that he attend an Old School Baptist meeting.

On that day he heard a lovely Elder expound upon the riches of God's grace. The words of the Elder struck a responsive chord and he knew the truth had touched his heart. He later learned of Dan River and Elder Spangler. He was given a burden to attend the meetings and later felt he must ask for a home with those he loved. He loved his pastor and felt to be given an ear to continue to hear the precious truth as God Blessed him to preach it.

Our Brother traveled a greater distance to attend his meetings at Dan River than any other member with whom I am familiar. He was a devoted and faithful member. During his last ten years, the church was his life and he was blessed to visit many other churches and associations. He never wanted to inconvenience a brother by accepting overnight lodging. Often, even when other accommodations could be made available, he would make arrangements for lodging at a local motel. Though he had been in declining health the last few years, he did not ponder over his physical condition. Rather, he felt blessed that things were as well with him as they were.

Naturally speaking, our brother loved little children and had a keen interest in watches and clocks. He was intrigued with unusually designed watches and enjoyed explaining the various intricate parts. He became filled with awe as the seemingly unrelated parts would, at their proper time, come together to accomplish the purpose of the watchmaker. Somehow, I feel he drew a parallel between this and the seemingly unrelated events throughout his life, which

at God's appointed time, came together to accomplish our Lord's sovereign purpose in his heart.

Our Brother was blessed to be at Dan River just two weeks before he died. He related that he did not expect to be back again. Apparently he felt that the time for his departure was at hand.

Brother Pasley was called from his walk on earth on Sunday evening, November 16, 1980. He has felt the sting of death and now, as countless millions before him, awaits that glorious resurrection day. Hopefully, when our Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven, he, along with other saints of God, shall hear our King say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

It is respectfully requested that a copy of this memorial be made available to the family and that our Brother be remembered in the *Signs of the Times* at the appropriate time.

In Brotherly love,
Bob R. Collie, Deacon

MRS. MAUD CARTER WEBB

Pleasantville Primitive Baptist Church, Rockingham County, N.C., acknowledges the passing of our dear sister in Christ. Sister Maud Webb, 93, died July 9, 1980, in Annie Penn Hospital, Reidsville, N.C., after a long illness. She was a loving wife and mother and devoted to her meetings until health failed. She raised flowers to bring to church and fixed the communion bread for her husband, who was a deacon. They had a lovely family who cared for her and her needs in her illness. She manifested the grace and faith in God in her walk of life.

Surviving are daughters, Mrs. Myrtle Dye, of the home, Mrs. Pete Hall, and Mrs. Gertrude Lynn of Greensboro, N.C., Mrs. Albert Humphrey, Summerfield, N.C., Mrs. William Sharron, Wentworth, N.C.; a son, Woodrow Webb, Summerfield, N.C.; and a large number of grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Pleasantville Church with her Pastor Elder H. W. Wray, and Preacher Robert Turner officiating. She was buried at the cemetery there.

Rachel Wray